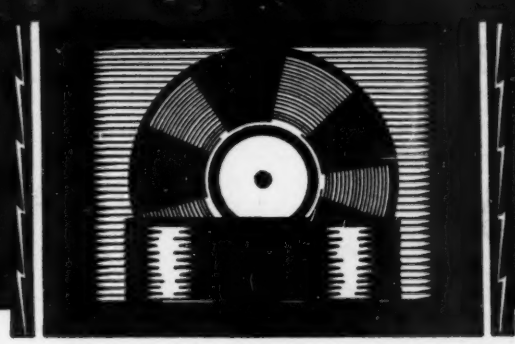


NOVEMBER, 1951

# AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



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EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

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# The American Music Lover

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### EDITORIAL

THE long singing career of Ernestine Schumann-Heink—over sixty years—came to a close on the evening of November 17th in her Hollywood home. The death of this great contralto removes from the contemporary scene another of the great artists who belonged to that Golden era of voice during the closing decade of the 19th century and the opening decade of the 20th.

Schumann-Heink was only sixteen when she made her debut in opera. This was in 1877 at the Royal Opera in Dresden. The role was Azucena in *Il Trovatore*. Four years later, she was retired from opera because of her first marriage. After she had given birth to four children, her husband deserted her, and she was compelled to return to her vocal career. She obtained a singing post with the Stadt Theater in Hamburg, but at a pittance. Here, however, she was acclaimed overnight as an artist of the foremost rank after an impromptu performance of *Carmen*, when she substituted for a temperamental prima donna who failed to put in an appearance.

American audiences first heard this singer in 1898. Her debut, in Chicago, was made in the role of Ortrud, a part for which she was ideally suited. Her success was immediate. So greatly did she endear herself to American audiences in the years that followed that she decided in 1909 to become a naturalized citizen. Perhaps no one who has adopted this country as their home has done any more for music than this singer. During the World War, her work in behalf of "her boys", as she called the American army and navy, was tremendous.

During her prime the noted contralto was regarded as a great Wagnerian singer. But Schumann-Heink was not only a distinguished operatic artist, she was also a great singer of songs. She was a born musician and showman, and she knew how successfully to put over a simple song or a

(Continued on Page 280)

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# The Importance of Gabriel Fauré

By PHILIP MILLER

**A**BOUT the middle of the 1860's a song appeared in France which was destined to play an important part in the history of music. The composer was a young man — not yet twenty — whose previous efforts had attracted no serious attention; partly because of their quality, and perhaps more on account of the similarity of his name to that of the popular singer and composer of inconsequential songs, Jean Baptiste Faure. This confusion of antitheses persists among the unknowing even to this day, for we often find *Les rameaux* or the *Crucifix* listed among the works of Gabriel Fauré. Nor did this little song of which I speak of itself establish its composer among the immortals. It was a simple, one might say classic, melody, with a pure and unpretentious chordal background, not so far removed from the type of romance which constituted the French song of that day, but having within it the germ of all that was to follow in French music — and thus holding a position of great importance in the musical history of the world. Yet even Fauré himself, I suppose, had hardly a suspicion that he had done anything extraordinary in the setting to music of Leconte de Lisle's *Lydia*.

To understand the importance of this melody, and of its composer, it is necessary to clear up certain misconceptions regarding French music. To the average music lover there are two great names which represent nearly all that is worthwhile in Gallic tonal art. César Franck, we are told, was the father of modern French music: Debussy, as the originator of impressionism, was not only the greatest of his countrymen, but was responsible for everything which has followed his works. Now in the first place—and my intention is not to steal laurels or tear down pedestals — thus to honor Franck is a gross injustice to the memory of Charles Francois Gounod. For without Gounod there could have been no Franck. The essential quality of the younger man is present in the older, and, though there can be no comparison between the best work of the two, their concep-

tions were not so very different. If it is true that the influence of Franck extended to all who followed him, it is, therefore, even more true of Gounod. Not Franck, nor Fauré, nor Debussy, nor Massenet, nor Honegger has been altogether free of this influence. In France they acknowledge this; but we, having put aside *The Redemption* as old and outworn, and being no longer in sympathy with the sweet and languorous, albeit sincere, sentiment of *Faust*, have relegated the composer to the past.

As for Debussy, as time goes on it becomes more apparent how much he owed to Gabriel Fauré. The fact that Fauré outlived him is no doubt the reason for the general impression that Debussy came first. And Debussy was a better showman — more of a "personality." His works are known and loved in America today, while our knowledge of Fauré has been, one might almost say, confined to violin and cello transcriptions of *Après un reve*. Debussy wrote a great music drama — so great indeed that it has been a matter of honor to perform it once a year at the Metropolitan, to the detriment of the box-office. He also wrote a number of works which have become standard in the orchestral repertory, and these are the chief reason for his popularity in this country today. Fauré also wrote a music drama which has been hailed by a small but estimable group as worthy to stand with *Pelléas et Mélisande*, but his orchestral output was very small. He frankly did not like to compose for the orchestra — a surprising fact in view of his skillful handling of instruments in chamber music — but preferred to work in smaller forms, and with smaller combinations.

Debussy gave picturesque titles to his piano pieces, while Fauré preferred the standard titles of the Chopin school. Debussy, as the high priest of impressionism, gives us a program to follow, while Fauré, the absolute musician, leaves us to draw our own conclusions.

Hence the music of Fauré is an acquired taste. It is too subtle to reveal itself com-





*An interesting study of Fauré taken shortly before his death.*

pletely in a few hearings. One must live with it and cultivate it — and realize that this composer must be met half-way. But this is true to a greater or lesser degree of all that is best in music — or indeed in any art. Emil Vuillermoz tells us that to love and understand Fauré is a privilege in which the initiate cannot help taking pride, because this appreciation denotes a certain keenness and superiority which sets them apart from their fellow men. This unfortunate attitude on the part of music lovers generally is one of the greatest barriers between the average man and the art. We musicians are snobs. Because our neighbors have not advanced beyond the obvious which to us has lost its meaning, we look upon them with condescension. If we could only take them with us to that which lies beyond, there would be a different tale to tell. But each of us must discover music for himself. No man can play tennis without exertion: no more can he passively accept the best which music has to offer. But simply because some of us have learned this truth is no occasion for smug pride. Such an attitude can only antagonize. There is nothing in the music of Gabriel Fauré which a normal man cannot come to understand — if he be willing to make sufficient effort to understand it.

(Fauré was a man of great simplicity and modesty.) His life was an uneventful one. He did not starve for art's sake, and never lacked recognition in his own country. He

was born in 1845, and lived until 1924. He was organist at the Madeleine in Paris and director of the Conservatoire. His pupils' names include such famous ones as Maurice Ravel, Florent Schmitt, Nadia Boulanger, Roger Ducasse, George Enesco, Louis Aubert, Charles Koechlin, Raoul Laparra and Gabriel Grovlez. Universally loved and respected, he was given the highest order in the Légion d'honneur. But in spite of this great honor and respect, or perhaps, because of it, he has not yet — even in France — been accorded a position commensurate with his true artistic stature. His admirers carry their admiration to a point which approaches adoration, and others accept him as just another French musician of the turn of the century.

To realize Fauré's historical importance it is necessary to study not only the trend of music in his time, but the history of the modern French poetry as well. For naturally the works of such men as Verlaine, Gauthier, and Sully Prudhomme had a great influence on the music of their period. Particularly is this true of so sensitive a musician as Fauré — (one to whom the proper setting of words meant so much. He was also, of course, very greatly influenced by certain composers who preceded him, though he is almost unique in his successful avoidance of Wagnerism. He is a kind of Chopin without the feverish qualities of the latter — as truly a son of Schumann as Brahms himself, but bearing little resemblance to the great German.

The youthful Fauré stands at a cross-road, at the top of an elevation, looking back to Gounod, to his masters, Niedermeyer and Saint-Saëns, to Schubert, to Mendelssohn, to Mozart and to Bach. Ahead, as he stands, he can see Debussy, Ravel, César Franck, himself — the promised land of French music, though unlike Moses he himself is later to enter that land and dwell there. He is the first Frenchman to absorb the essential quality of the German romanticists, and with the application of French classicism, to make of it the material of a new school.

It was as a song writer that he made his bow, and it is undoubtedly as a song writer that he will be most gratefully remembered. It was in his songs that he developed his technique. One has only to examine the salon romances which constituted French song before him to realize the importance of this. There were, in those days, two principal types of French song. The one was the *mélodie*, such as Gounod's *Au printemps* and *Le soir* — the other the more dramatic called ballad, or *scena*, often interspersed with recitative, typified by Niedermeyer's *Le lac*, or Gounod's *Le vallon*.

As has been said above, the first songs of Fauré marked no very definite advance. His *Opus 1, No. 1*, is ordinary in the extreme, and, while *No. 2* is a much more interesting song, it might easily be one of the many by Gounod. His next effort was the charming *Dans les ruines d'une abbaye*, which has become closely identified in our day with the art of Povla Frijs (she has recorded it on Victor 1653). Here the young composer, in setting Victor Hugo's little poem, shows an understanding of life far beyond his years. The picture of the oblivious lovers in the cloister ruins is treated with gentle and loving irony by the poet, and Fauré has caught this note.

But, as we have seen, it was with *Lydia, Opus 4, No. 2*, that the musician really found himself. This *mélodie* (the word is used in its old sense) is quite as surely Fauré as anything he ever wrote — a young immature Fauré, to be sure, but starting off upon the course which he was so steadily to follow throughout his life. (Odeon 188634, by Roger Bourdin, or HMV DB-4878 by Panžera).

The dramatic element (always a rare one) first makes itself felt in *Chant d'automne, L'absent* — a truly powerful picture — and *La rançon*. But surely the song in the first set of twenty which is most familiar to us in America is the famous *Après un rêve*. Here again is the old type of French *mélodie*, but

transfigured by a quality for which one seeks in vain among the songs of the Gounod period. Fauré has learned, presumably from the Germans, the secret of underlining the words of a poem in its musical setting. Though the verse of Romain Bussine is not of towering importance, and though Fauré's melodic line is a florid one, the prosody is true and forceful. Some of us may feel that the song has suffered from repetition, but it takes only a good performance to make it live again. At least three such performances are to be had on records — by Maggie Teyte (Decca F-40300) by Georges Thill (French Columbia LF-125), and by Eidé Noréna (HMV DA-4874), though the last is not improved by the orchestral accompaniment.

The second volume of *Mémoires* contains twenty songs written in the 1880's. The first one, *Nell*, is a tune pure and simple — a delightful tune but not a great song. The second, *Le voyageur*, is dramatic — somewhat in the manner of Duparc. But it is *Automne* which marks the real beginning of the *Lied française*. Here, we may say, the composer finds his second manner. It is a poem of autumnal regret which Armand Silvestre has written, and Fauré, with the sure hand of a master, has given it a stark and tragic melody. The right hand of the piano part moves in uninterrupted triplets, and the bass is a persistent series of octaves. Ninon Vallin sings *Automne* on Odeon 188578.

The three songs which comprise the little cycle, *Poème d'un jour* have held a place among the more popular of Fauré's works. Hardly to be classed with his great efforts, they have considerable characteristic melodic charm. The story is told simply in the titles — *Rencontre, Trojourns, Adieu*. Once again the composer's sense of word setting is well in evidence. The writer remembers the effect made by Eidé Noréna in her singing of this cycle at Town Hall several seasons ago. Her treatment of the final word — *Adieu!* — was as simple as that of Fauré, and through her art the composer won a triumph. She has recorded the cycle for HMV (K-7202).

*Les berceaux* is one of the greatest of French songs. The poem of Sully Prudhomme is a simple and beautiful one, describing the strange power of the cradles at home over the fathers who have gone to sea. The lilting metre of the verse has suggested to the composer a rocking accompaniment, descriptive

(Continued on Page 250)

# The Legend of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony

By PETER HUGH REED

## I

MUSICIAN and music lover meet on a common ground of approbation where Schubert's "*Unfinished*" Symphony is concerned. It is one of the most universally beloved symphonic compositions in existence. Its unaffected sweetness, its melancholic brooding, its protesting drama, and its simple sentient beauty impress both alike. Its note of yearning, the sorrow in its song is, of course, intensely personal, and it is because of this fact that it engenders an affection that is wholly convincing.

Written in the composer's twenty-fifth year, 1822, the "*Unfinished*" Symphony was destined to remain buried for nearly a half century. It was, as a fact, forty-three years after its conception, 1865, or thirty-seven years after Schubert's death, that it was first produced — having then attained an age that superseded by almost half again the life of its creator.

The story of this work is a highly interesting and romantic. Although it is emphatically stated by Grove and others that Schubert wrote the "*Unfinished*" to express his gratitude for having been elected an honorary member in the *Musik Verein* at Graz, this would seem to be conclusively disproven by the fact that the composition is dated seven months prior to the proposal of his name for membership, and eleven months prior to that society's acceptance of him as a member. That Schubert sent the manuscript of his incompleted *Eighth Symphony* to that society later "to express in tone his animated gratitude" there can be small doubt. Whether that organization ever received the score or not, however, no one really knows. It has been conjectured that they did, and that they tried it over and found it technically impracticable for performance, since we definitely know that they later turned down an opera for a similar reason. There is, however, another possibility, the possibility of a shortsightedness on the part of the society's officials, occasioned by the fact that the work was in-

complete. It is not improbable that they may have deemed the omission of the last two movements, an insufficient expression of gratitude to an organization of their kind. However, this is purely conjectural—a conclusion as a matter of fact, postulated ahead of our story.

The legend begins in the Fall of 1822 — Schubert's twenty-fifth year. It was then that the inspiration for the two completed movements of his *B Minor Symphony* were written. Exactly what inspired or prompted this music, we do not know. We can speculate, but there is no assurance that we would be right. Undoubtedly a soul-struggle was taking place within Schubert — perhaps he even harbored thoughts of complete peace. Some writers contend the music reveals this. Certainly life was not too kindly to him. Blessed with infinite riches, but lacking in the realism of worldly wealth, he knew only poverty in life. The inspiration, the urge to create was there, and music flowed from his pen like water from a stream's source, yet he could not exist on music alone, unless it was reconverted into the wherewithal to buy subsistence, which did not always come about too advantageously. The yearning note in the music of the "*Unfinished*" unquestionably emanated from the depths of Schubert's being — from the subconscious amalgamation of his disappointments, his thwarted hopes, his desires, his unfulfilled dreams, his sensitive reticence. That this music took shape quite quickly once it was begun, we can believe, since Schubert is known to have composed spontaneously and rapidly.

It was in the Autumn of 1822 that Schubert made application to the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, a well-known organization in his native Vienna, for membership as a viola player. There are circumstances which definitely make us believe, that Schubert was hoping that his *B minor Symphony* would be performed by this organization; in other words he was planning to offer it to them as a token of his appreciation if they sanc-

tioned his membership. On the grounds that they considered him a professional musician, and therefore ineligible to membership, however, the society refused him admittance.

What tricks Fate plays — what seemingly cruel pranks! Schubert hoped to have the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* introduce his *Eighth Symphony* to the world, and so Fate arranged it, but not until thirty-seven years after his death.

Shortly after this, through the intercession of three friends, Johann Jenger and the brothers Anselm and Josef Hüttenbrenner, Schubert was proposed for membership in the *Musik Verein* at Graz, the capital of Styria, and subsequently admitted. The membership diploma to this organization expressed such unfeigned admiration of his musical abilities, that Schubert, in order to show his Styrian friends how much he appreciated the honor conferred upon him, promptly wrote promising them the score of one of his symphonies:

Worthy Music Society:

For the diploma of honorary membership that you so kindly sent me, and which I received after a long absence from Vienna, I want to thank you sincerely.

I hope that through my ardor for the art of music that I shall one day be worthy of this exceptional honor. To show in music's tone my heartfelt thanks, I shall take the liberty to give very soon to the worthy Music Society, a score of one of my symphonies.

With the highest esteem, I remain a willing servant of your worthy Society.

Franz Schubert.

Undoubtedly Schubert planned to send the score of his "*Unfinished*" to the Graz Society, but although he promised that score "soon" it was sometime before he turned over the two movements of this work to Anselm Hüttenbrenner for delivery. Was Schubert reluctant to part with the score? Did he prize it so highly? Or had he dreamed so vividly of its first performance in Vienna that he was reluctant to give it to a small town society? It would seem that such was the case, for he waited nearly a year before he parted with the work, and then only on the prompting of his father.

## II.

Two friends of Schubert's figure prominently in the history of the "*Unfinished*". They are the brothers Anselm and Josef Hüttenbrenner, who came from Graz, but whom Schubert knew in Vienna. Josef was a government clerk in the Austrian capital, and Anselm was a musician, whose only claim

to fame lies, not in his musical abilities, but in two distinctive services that he performed for his eminent contemporaries — Beethoven and Schubert. It was Anselm who closed the eyes of the great Beethoven in their final slumber, and it was he who faithfully treasured for many years after Schubert's death in his cottage at Graz, the manuscript of the "*Unfinished*" *Symphony*.

Dahms tells us that Anselm's "indiscriminate enthusiasms" were often embarrassing to Schubert. Poor Schubert, he could not see ahead, he could not know that those "enthusiasms" would one day do him a great service.

Josef Hüttenbrenner, although a government clerk, was nonetheless interested in music. He was one of Schubert's closest friends and an ardent worker for his cause. Duncan, in his life of Schubert, says that "for the greater part of his own life, Josef worked in the interests of Schubert, but whether through lack of influence or inadequate tact, he met with quite disproportionate success."

It was to Josef that Schubert gave his score of the *B minor* with instructions to deliver it to his brother, who was the artistic director of the *Musik Verein* at Graz. This accordingly Josef did; and from that point up until 37 years later nothing more was heard of the score. We have already speculated on what the Graz Society may have done—that is of course provided Anselm delivered the music to them. If the society was critical of the score, because of supposed technical difficulties or because of its incomplete state, we can well believe that Anselm resented it; and it is not a stretch of the imagination to assume that he removed it, either with or without mutual agreement, to his own home — there to treasure it until the time was ripe for its reproduction in public.

## III.

The next we hear of the "*Unfinished*" *Symphony* is in 1860. At this time Josef Hüttenbrenner wrote to Johann Herbeck, then the conductor of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna, asking if he might be admitted to the society as a singing member. In the same letter he requested Herbeck, who was one of the foremost conductors in Vienna, to look over some compositions by his brother Anselm, and mentioned at the same time that the latter had some unpublished music by Franz Schubert. "One manuscript called the *Eighth Symphony in B Minor*," he imparted,



Jenger, Anselm Hüttenbrenner and Schubert  
(From a Crayon by Teltscher — about 1827)

"is equally as good as his *C major Symphony*, and also parallel to many of Beethoven's symphonies." That Josef had an augury of its true worth proves that he was no ordinary lover of music.

Although Josef wrote Herbeck in 1860 about the "*Unfinished*", five more years passed before this conductor sought to obtain the score. We may assume that the delay was occasioned in part, because he did not favor Anselm as a composer; at the same time subsequent developments tend to lead us to believe that he might have looked over that musician's works had Josef's letter been phrased more tactfully. But since Josef virtually demanded that one of his brother's compositions be performed before the release of the Schubert score, we can understand Herbeck's seeming lack of interest even in a new work by Schubert.

So the years passed on until the forty-third following the creation of the "*Unfinished*". Then the strange silence of the Fates was broken, and that sweet, grief-laden song for orchestra was given to a widely appreciative world.

It was in May, 1865, in the quiet and peace of the Austrian village of Graz that the tried and already world-weary musician Anselm relinquished the score into the hands of Johann Herbeck. At a time when we were recovering from the emancipation of the slaves and the death of Abraham Lincoln,

Anselm was presenting to the world a manuscript which when once sounded was to re-echo a message of resignation and peace around the globe. It was one of the last significant works given the world from that musical genius. Franz Schubert, who — as Sidney Grew, the English writer has said — "made the world a different place for all lovers of music who came after him; for we have by him a kind of beauty now around us which but for him we never should have had, because since music began there has been none just like him."

It was early on the morning of the first of May, 1865, that Herbeck enroute with a relative stopped off at the Inn at Graz. There seems to be no reason to believe that his halt was one primarily intended as a rest, nor that his subsequent meeting with Anselm should be considered an accidental one. On the contrary, from after events, it would seem that his main purpose for that stop-off was especially to see the aging musician and if possible obtain the manuscript of the *Eighth Symphony* of Schubert, which Josef had praised so highly.

Seated in the Inn, Herbeck casually inquired of the landlord whether Herr Anselm Hüttenbrenner still resided in the village. The landlord answered in the affirmative and further imparted the information that Herr Hüttenbrenner breakfasted every morning in the Inn and that he would undoubtedly be there soon.



When the old man arrived, Herbeck greeted him cordially, although the former seemed scarcely in a happy frame of mind. After a preliminary conversation, Herbeck imparted to the old musician that he was in Graz because he had decided to produce one of his, (Anselm's) works at a concert in Vienna. One can imagine that this immediately established friendly relations between the two men, and that Anselm's mood brightened considerably. And so it came about that after breakfast the two men repaired to the home of the elder musician, which was not far distant.

Anselm's cottage was a small one of doubtful age, which like its owner, displayed the marks of time. There in a room of considerable confusion, filled with yellowed and dirty papers, he displayed his manuscripts to Herbeck; and there the latter went over them one by one with seeming care and deliberation, finally selecting a single overture.

Whatever desire Herbeck had to see the Schubert score, he concealed from Anselm. Perhaps Herbeck realized that he was in the presence of one nearing the ultimate adventure of life, and out of kindly deference, deemed it better to permit him a short respite in a new-found belief in himself. So, it will be noted, those last five years came to prove a kindness to Anselm, while to Schubert's *B minor Symphony* they only added a bit more dust and discoloration to its pages.

After Anselm's composition was chosen, Herbeck casually told the old musician that he desired to bring forward three contemporaries in one concert before the Viennese public — Anselm Hüttenbrenner, Franz Schubert and Franz Laschner, the latter a well-known composer then in his prime.

One can readily imagine how pleased Anselm was at this plan — to share in equal honors with his beloved Franz and the successful Laschner. Hence, when Herbeck added he thought it would be appropriate to represent each composer with a new work, Anselm readily responded to the suggestion and offered the Schubert score.

Repairing to an antiquated chest, Anselm carefully removed from its depths a mass of old papers. It was not long before he found the object of his search and into the hands of his expectant visitor lay the score of Schubert's *B minor Symphony*. Herbeck, viewing it for the first time, found that it was freely but neatly inscribed upon oblong paper with considerable grace in the writing and carefully inserted corrections. Upon

the cover page, he read the following inscription:

"Symphonie in H moll, von Franz Schubert,  
Wien, 30te Oct. 1822."

The conductor glanced through the score evincing no undue interest. Perhaps out of deference to Anselm he offered no comment, but it is more than likely that he did so in order that the old man would not think that he attached any importance to it. After hurriedly reading it through, he asked permission to have it copied, which Anselm readily granted. And when he casually added that it would likely take some time, the old musician, undoubtedly happy in the belief that it was for one of his own works that Herbeck had primarily come to Graz, told him not to hurry.

So the *B minor Symphony* of Franz Schubert came into the possession of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, the society which had turned him down so ungraciously as a member, forty-three years previously. Although Herbeck received the manuscript on the first of May, it was not until the seventeenth of the following December, however, that it was first performed. This was at a concert of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna under his direction. It would seem superfluous to say that the work was generously received.

Why Schubert never completed his *B minor Symphony*, no one will probably ever really know. Perhaps it was because of the many disappointments which attended him at this time. We know that the publisher Peters refused to take an interest in his music in an truly high-handed manner, which must have upset his deeply sensitive nature. We know that both he and Josef Hüttenbrenner made unsuccessful efforts to have two of Schubert's operas performed. And we know that the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, to whom he originally looked for performance of the work, turned down coldly his application of membership. Perhaps he put so much into those two movements that he truly felt them conclusive in themselves. Many believe this to be so. Whether he later intended to complete the work or not is a question upon which different writers disagree, despite his sketch for another movement. Again, having finished the two movements, and having been turned down by the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, it is quite possible that he may have put the work aside and temporarily forgotten its existence.

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# Some Reflections on Emma Calvé

By CEDRIC WALLIS

IT IS a reproach not to be borne, that the present generation does not remember Calvé. Yet how should we remember her, if it were not for the priceless heritage of her all-too-few records? It is fifteen years or more since I myself heard her sing, and she cannot have appeared more than once or twice in England since that time. Not so long ago we experienced the disappointment of her non-appearance at the De Lara Memorial Concert. But I for one refuse to grumble, for how happy we are in the possession of those same records, and what a superb artist they show her to be.

Forty years have passed now, since the heyday of the four great sopranos, Melba, Eames, Nordica and Calvé. Melba and Nordica are gone and Eames has been for years in retirement. Only Calvé still sings occasionally in public, which is perhaps an argument in support of a friend of mine who always concluded any discussion about the incomparable four by misquoting St. Paul.

"And the greatest of these," he would say, "is Calvé".

As I listen to her records, I wonder if perhaps he wasn't right? She has more temperament than Melba or Eames, and almost as lovely a voice as either of them. Surely her versatility is as amazing as Nordica's, though it runs on rather different lines. A singer who begins her career with Lakmé, Lucia and Amina, and eventually becomes the greatest Carmen of her generation, can hold a fairly steady candle even to the famous Verdi-Wagner feats of a Nordica. And I sometimes wonder if the American soprano's versatility was as wisely restrained within the true limits of her voice as Calvé's?

Talking of versatility leads me directly on to what seems to be the outstanding difference between Calvé as a lyric artist and Melba or Eames. I leave Nordica out of this part of the discussion, because I do not consider I have heard a sufficient number of her rec-

ords to judge the question fairly, as far as she is concerned. Also, what I am about to say probably wouldn't apply to her, anyway. To revert then:—

A Melba record always seems to me to be just a Melba record, — by which I mean that it is Melba, rather than the character in the opera or the essential atmosphere of the song, that gets over. All her operatic records are, in fact, as much the same character as they are the same lovely voice, — in a word, Melba. It is true that her performance in certain parts has become for many of us the standard whereby we judge all others. Mimi and Desdemona, for example, seem always in the abstract to have Melba's voice. That does not contradict but rather extends the scope of my contention. So strong was Melba's individuality as a singer, and so limited



An Early Picture of Calvé as Carmen  
(About 1889)

were her gifts as an actress, that she stamped her own personality on her parts, rather than attempt to assume the quality of characters beyond her dramatic range. The result, whatever the character, was always primarily Melba. This is the secret of her immense success in the golden age of the star system, as it is the whole reason why she never matched her incomparable singing with the last divine spark that would have made her a supreme artist.

The same is to some extent true of Eames, as it is true of every singer who is a good enough vocalist and an indifferent enough actress just to sing and let the characters go hang. Responsibility for his intensely subjective view of the singer's art must largely be laid, one supposes, at Verdi's door (or was it Rossini's), with his *voce, voce e voce* demand, when asked for a singer's first three requirements. One feels that even he may have had cause to regret so sweeping a disregard for dramatic gifts, when it became a question of interpreting, for example, an opera like *Aida*?

What is certain is that all this has nothing whatever to do with Calvé. Let us observe for ourselves the sense of character she brings to her work. Not only is she a different person in each record, but she seems to assume a different voice for each of her parts. This, surely, is the only true versatility of the lyric drama, but how rare a quality it has become?

We will begin with the *Habanera* from *Carmen*, which remains after about twenty-five years the classic recording of the song. What perfect singing it is! The rich mezzo-soprano is as smooth as velvet, but there is an ocean of feeling beneath the even flow of creamy tone. These modern singers (some of them!) should cease their would-be dramatic screams for a while and learn how to act with the voice and keep it beautiful at the same time, — keep it rhythmic and authoritative, yet intensely vital and emotional.

On the back of the *Habanera* we find a ringing dramatic soprano, singing Santuzza's air from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The voice is bright and has a dramatic edge on it. The hopeless passion of the scorned Santuzza has

completely ousted Carmen's dark languors. Another interesting record is *Il est doux* from Massenet's *Hérodiade*. The character of Salomé is not a pleasant one, and though the singing is always beautiful, there is an evil tang in the bright soprano tone. It somewhat recalls the haunting, terrifying beauty of the phrases given to the Erlkönig in Schubert's song. It is almost impossible to believe that the possessor of this glittering voice has also sung the contralto part of *Hérodiade* in the same opera, — until one remembers that nothing seems impossible to Calvé. Listen to her again, as she sings Félicien David's *Couplets du Mysoli*. Here we seem to have three voices in the same song, the rich soprano which we may call her standard tone, the dark mezzo quality in the lower phrases, and up above an amazing, disembodied *mezza-voce*, which Calvé herself calls her "fourth voice". This uncanny upper register is even more startlingly displayed in a little song called *Lisette*, which she has recorded with Gounod's rather commonplace *Au printemps*. Here she soars up an octave to a light and fluting high D, which is sustained for a number of seconds without the least apparent effort. It is a vocal feat which a Tetrassini might envy. I seem to remember that Calvé states in her memoirs that she learnt the trick of this "fourth voice" register from a monsignor who had the training of one of the great Catholic choirs of Italy. If this is so, it might well be an effect that has come down from the days of the *castrati*, whose singing, one imagines, would abound in such technical *tours de force*.

Finally, if you would hear almost all the riches that Calvé has to give, on one record, play her *Trois Chansons pour les Tout Petits*. The record is old and clanky and the songs are naive, but no one save a very great artist could get them over with such humour, such a sense of drama, and such lovely tone in all her several voices. We may never listen to her like again, but at least her records are here to set a standard for all time. Do our modern sopranos ever listen to them, one wonders? Perhaps not, for they would surely be the despair of most. The treasure, then, is for us who can admire the more because we cannot emulate, being by nature different! But even a baritone must learn something from such an artist.

# The Popular Publication of Folk Songs

By HERBERT HALPERT

THE scientific or scholarly study of folk songs, as distinct from superficial literary appreciation, dates from the middle of the last century. Serious musical study of folk song is even later. The necessity of noting folk tunes exactly as they were sung was a difficult notion for musicians to comprehend. The late Cecil Sharp, the greatest collector of English folk songs, held that most of the musical notation of folk songs made before 1890 was not worthy of serious consideration. The early musicians, with the usual conservatism of the caste, had "corrected" the barbarisms of folk melody, much as the earlier ballad text collectors, including such notables as Bishop Percy and Sir Walter Scott, had doctored the material they assembled.

With changed standards of aesthetics and scholarship, we are no longer satisfied with such editing. Nowadays folk song belongs to the province of the folklorist. A studious accuracy to every quirk and variation in a folk singer's rendition of a tune is the accepted rule. Certain distinct values result from this. Such scholars as Phillips Barry, have shown how much can be learned of the previous history and the growth and change of folk songs from the analysis of the variants of folk melodies.

Few musicians have any knowledge of the work that has been done in this field. Furthermore, many musicians seem incapable of realizing that folk music is essentially not harmonic, and that attempts to treat folk songs like art songs may pervert the essential quality of the former. Musicians therefore rarely get a chance to work with folk songs and then only with the suspicious regard of the scholar and the folklorist.

This scholarly avoidance of dealings with the aesthetic has its evil side in that most people think of folk songs as something esoteric and too complex for enjoyment. But the folk song, by its very definition, belongs to the people. If we define a folk song in part, as a song long popular in oral tradition, we can feel with some justice, that scholar-

ship takes too much upon itself in attempting to exclude all others from the field.

Popular publication of folk songs is a very old tradition. Mopsa, in Shakespeare's "Winter's Tale," recommends buying them for a long-popular reason: "I love a ballad in print, a-life for then we are sure they are true." A ballad well known in this country, "Barbara Allen", owes much of its currency to its frequent publication in popular songsters and broadside sheets.

The books by John Niles, and Matteson & Henry\*, are additions to Schirmer's honorably long line of American folk songs in popular format. The first volume in the series, by none other than Cecil Sharp, set a high standard for popular work. Sharp harmonized his songs because he felt that the musical culture of the average person is based so largely on harmonic ideas that, for the most part, the beauty of a simple melodic line would not be appreciated without harmonic support.

With such an authority behind us, we can safely say that because a folk-song collection is popular, is in itself no detracting from its value. It implies that a certain selectivity has operated, and this is obvious from the songs presented in these books. They have been chosen with an eye to the pleasure they would give even an untrained singer. All who have heard how delightfully Mr. Matteson and Mr. Niles sing folk songs may find some of their charm recalled by this choice of songs.

In the first installment by Woodrow Wilson's daughter, of her recollections of her father (which appeared in a popular weekly magazine), she includes the text of a folk song which her father used to sing. In this fifth volume by John J. Niles, issued in Schirmer's Folk Song Series, there is a closely related version of this Kentucky riddle song

\* Beech Mountain Folk-Songs and Ballads, Matteson & Henry. American Folk-Song Series, Set No. 15, G. Schirmer, N. Y. 75 cents. More Songs of the Hill-Folk, John J. Niles, American Folk-Song Series, Set No. 17, G. Schirmer, N. Y. 50 cents.

with similar sets of questions and answers and a similar refrain:

"Can there be a book, that no man's read?  
*Piri-miri-dictum Domini.*  
Can there be a blanket without a thread?"

The terms of the questions are fulfilled by the reply that a book yet in press has not been read and wool, before it is spun and woven, is a blanket without a thread. Other appealing songs of European parentage are the versions of the ballad "Barbary Ellen," and the song "The Cuckoo". I have found no European source for the song "Black is the color of my true love's hair", but it has a lovely Elizabethan ring to both music and text.

The Niles collection presents examples of traditional Anglo-American folk songs and ballads collected from widely separated regions in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. The volume by Maurice Matteson & Mellinger Henry has songs from a limited range of territory, namely the district around Banner Elk, North Carolina. It includes a much wider choice of selection than the Niles' book, containing as it does not merely Anglo-American ballads and folk songs but also other types of ballads and songs indigenous to this country. It is much more representative of what one would find in any area of the mountains where folk songs are still sung.

Particularly to be noted are the ballad "Springfield Mountain", a version of one of the oldest strictly American folk songs still current in popular usage; and the versions of "George Colon", "Bolakin", "Sir Hugh", all British ballads. There are many other folk songs that are very typical but I leave them to be discovered by the interested perusers of the book. Many will no doubt be surprised to learn that a song so commonly known as:

"The fourth night when I come home,  
As drunk as I could be,  
I saw a head lying on the bed  
Where my head ought to be."

is a respected member of Prof. Child's ballad canon. Mr. Mellinger Henry is a very well known collector of folk songs, and this first volume of his to be published with the music has been awaited for some time. His comments in the foreword to the volume are worth reading.

There is one chief objection to be noted to both of these books. Mr. Henry is cognizant of the fact that, in Mr. Barry's words, folk song collectors should record "The music to which *the whole text is sung*". Now obviously it would be difficult to do this in so small

a volume, especially since publishers are not anxious to add pages on what seems unimportant repetition. Nevertheless, I feel certain that they would be willing to insert a few of the variations which are frequently no more than two or three notes at the beginning of each repetition of the ballad stanza, and the occasional variants of certain phrases, which melodically break the monotony of exact repetition. Introduction of these small changes would add to the exactness of the transcription and give a better idea of folk songs to the untrained singer.

But even without these aids, these two books are very well worth having. They are in a small, handy format and easily fit into ordinary book shelves, thus making them accessible for general reading and not merely for use with an instrument. They include a wide selection of very singable songs with simple accompaniments. Lastly and not least, the price is very low. I hope they will have the widespread popularity that the old songsters used to have, filling, as they do, more than the functions of the latter.

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### Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony

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as he was known to have done — so prolific was his creative output.

The only thing left to substantiate an idea of completion is a sketch for the opening of the third movement and part of the *Trio*, which in the manuscript draft is markedly inferior to the finished first and second movements.

The sobriquet "*Unfinished*" by which the world knows Schubert's great *B minor Symphony* is one of the most absurd cognominal ambiguities ever invented. Labelled as an unfinished product, it provokes a false picture of its composer; one that conjures a pathetic portrait of a youthful musician, with the powers of a genius, being mown down by the reaper Death in the prime of his creative ability. Which, of course, is ridiculous. For Schubert's *B minor* is not another Mozart *Requiem*, since it was written six years before the composer's death.

The idea that the symphony should be completed has been advanced at various times, but fortunately each time it has come to naught. For the "*Unfinished*" *Symphony* is unquestionably one of the most finished symphonic expressions ever conceived. The rare quality of peace in its lovely *Andante con*

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# Miscellany

By DONALD W. ALDOUS, M. Inst. E.

ONE of the most interesting and important innovations in recent months is the so-called sound-book, i. e., an illustrater book-cum-records, entitled "Songs of Wild Birds," by E. M. Nicholson and Ludwig Koch. This is published in England by Messrs. H. F. and G. Witherby at 15s.

The novelty is that, in addition to the text-book on the subject, two ten-inch double-sided gramophone records of the actual songs of fifteen wild birds are supplied. These songs were recorded by the Parlophone Company's mobile recording van, which visited country woods to obtain the songs under natural conditions, as no artificial effects, cage-birds or aviary recordings were to be used. Actually about eighty-five records were made, and these were winnowed to produce the two final released pressings. It will be realised that to procure satisfactory recordings of such birds as the wren, woodpecker, cuckoo and black-bird is no easy task, but the results are surprisingly good and must be classed as a technical achievement. The main virtue necessary for this work seems to be patience, which was rewarded after many hours of waiting and wax blanks had been wasted!

The sound recording was supervised by Dr. Koch, who introduced the Parlophone *Two Thousand Years of Music*, an album of twelve ten-inch records covering a musical period from the earliest times to the end of the eighteenth century, and he was the originator of the sound-book idea. His first efforts were issued in Germany and were *The Call of Africa* followed by *Woodland Sounds*.

This production is one that deserves full support and it is to be hoped that it will be followed by similar sound-books dealing with other animals and birds recorded in their natural habitat.

Another similar work that, as yet, has not received much publicity is *Zoo Voices*, which is an album of six flexible five-inch records of the sounds and noises of wild animals specially recorded at the English Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park and at Whipsnade. A noteworthy feature is that it costs only 1s. 6d. (thirty cents). One is taken, as it were,

round the "Zoo" by Dr. Julian Huxley, the Secretary of the Zoological Society of London, who also provides the running commentary.

A useful change, introduced by "Columbia" in England, is the replacement of the standard 9/32 ins. centre sindle-hole of a disc by a polygonal (actually twelve-sided) aperture. As this hole grips the spindle more tightly, the slipping of records on the turntable, causing speed fluctuation and consequent pitch variation of the reproduced sounds, is prevented; the removal of this trouble will be especially appreciated by those possessing automatic record-changers.

Finally, a reference to a publication of the Universal Microphone Co., Ltd., of Inglewood, California, called *A Treatise on Practical Wax Recording*, by Everitte K. Barnes, (price 50 cents). A detailed review is not possible at the moment, but the title is self-explanatory and the book is recommended to technical readers.

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*moto*, veritably makes the term *unfinished* as applied to this work not only an impertinence but an incongruity.

As Herbert Peyser, in his splendid article on this work published in the *Musical Quarterly* for October, 1928, stated — "we are no longer certain that it is imperative to invoke the example of Beethoven's two-movement sonatas in order to justify our assurance of the unequivocal and infinitely assuaging completeness which Schubert here encompassed and which he unquestionably recognized. The aim of the *B minor Symphony* is vastly different from the less subjective purpose of the *C major*. And as that aim was substantially attained at the close of the *andante* and the moods of the symphonic microcosm were rounded out and to the last syllable recorded, further movements were irrelevant and immaterial."

(For a comparison of various recordings of this work — see page 280).

## The Importance of Fauré

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at once of the cradles and of the waves along the quay. Typical of Fauré is the climbing melody of the middle section, reaching its climax with the idea of the luring of the men by the shining horizon. Characteristic too is the absence of any effect the least bit forced or unnatural. The harmonization, while certainly not obvious, is never striking on its own account. Indeed the words, the melody and the harmony are unified and inseparable. This is the secret of great song writing. It would be impossible to praise too highly Ninon Vallin's superb record of *Les berceaux*, sung to Marguerite Long's accompaniment (French Columbia LF-125).

Ravel considers *Le secret* one of the most beautiful of the Fauré *Lieder*, and *Les roses d'Ispahan* is surely one of the most popular. The former is to be had on HMV DA-4814, sung by Panzéra, and the latter is beautifully done by Roger Bourdin on Odeon 188634.

The crowning glory of Volume 2, however, is the admirable setting of Verlaine's *Clair de lune*, for here Fauré finds his own special poet. There has been other fine Verlaine songs, and there have been several worthy and successful attempts to clothe this particular poem with music, but it is Fauré's name which will be linked with that of Verlaine as the musician most completely in sympathy with this poet. *Clair de lune* is a minuet, played by the piano, while the voice, quietly and independently, sings the words. It is as calm and unconcerned as the moonlight itself, as truthfully unreal as the art of Watteau which inspired the poem. It is an extremely difficult song to sing, but, once mastered, tremendously grateful. To give it its true meaning the singer should maintain a steady rhythm throughout — any *ritard* or other liberty will mar the ironic placidity of the music. Ninon Vallin, in her otherwise excellent record, makes the mistake of slowing up slightly at the end, but hers is probably the most satisfactory version (Odeon 188578).

In the third volume of *Twenty Melodies* we find Fauré in complete command of his medium. Where is there a more perfect musical expression of a poetic idea than in *Au cimetière*? Surely this is one of the greatest of all songs. Even before the voice enters, in the simple minor triad we feel the mastery of the composer. "Happy is he who dies here like the birds in the fields!" All is peace

and quiet; one can literally see the French landscape. Then the poet cries out "How much more unfortunate is he who dies at sea!" a triplet figure in the accompaniment gives the feeling of unrest, and the declamation is so perfect as to make one shiver with the terror of the idea. Then a return to the quiet of the opening section, with a repetition of the first few lines. This song has been magnificently recorded by the distinguished French baritone, Charles Panzéra, on HMV DB-4903.

Passing over several lovely songs, we come to the Verlaine poems of Opus 58. The first three are especially interesting because of the celebrated settings of the verses by other composers. Fauré's *Mandoline* (the opening is identical with that of Hahn's setting) is less openly ironical than Debussy's. Like *Clair de lune* its meaning is concealed below the surface. *En sourdine* is another of the great songs. The first measure contains simply the E flat major arpeggio, but how perfect a setting for the opening line: "Calme dans le demi-jour que les branches hautes font . . ." (Calm in the twilight of the woods . . .) Surely this melody is peace itself. Yet how different from the half-shades of Debussy — and how much more natural, more undeniably true! And how much more subtle than the really very lovely setting by Reynaldo Hahn! Compare the treatment of the final line: "Voix de notre désespoir, le rossignol chantera." Whereas Debussy's accent falls on *voix* — "Voice of our hopelessness, the nightingale shall sing" — Hahn gives importance to the idea of singing, but Fauré renders it thus — "Voice of our hopelessness, the nightingale shall sing." This song occupies the reverse side of the Panzéra *Au cimetière* mentioned above.

To compare *Green* with the Debussy version is a more difficult task, as the two conceptions are so very different. If Debussy's has more of the early morning atmosphere of the poem, that of Fauré's is more artfully direct.

*Le parfum impérissable*, dedicated, amusingly enough, to Tosti, is a fine example of Fauré's last manner of song writing. It is almost a musical recitation with a richly harmonic background. *Prison* again makes a most interesting contrast to the familiar song of Hahn — perhaps the finest song that composer has given us. Less fertile in harmonic resource than Fauré, Hahn has always had a strong sense of the value of word-setting. So true is his prosody that his best songs sometimes stand in the way of a just appreciation

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# Overtones

## Record Sales

Record sales in the past year have advanced by leaps and bounds. The latest from the manufacturers of Red-Seal says Victor is selling 1,220,000 records a month. Of this 300,000, we understand, are Red-Seal.

## Harpsichord Recordings

The interest in harpsichord recordings, which has been developed in this country largely through Columbia releases made by Yella Pessl, has stirred up competition. For this month Victor brings forward 3 releases made by the eminent Polish artist, Wanda Landowska, and rumor has it that domestic Decca has signed up John Kirkpatrick, the American harpsichordist, to make some recordings for them.

## The Debussy-Teyte Album

The phonograph recital of Debussy songs, which Victor brings forward this month, has an interesting history. It was Mr. Joseph Brogan of The Gramophone Shop in New York City who first conceived the idea of this album of songs. Mr. Brogan, a keen admirer of the art of the English soprano, Maggie Teyte, suggested the idea of the recital to her last year when she was in New York. Although the singer was willing at that time to make the phonograph recital, she received no encouragement from domestic recording companies. Hence, when Mr. Brogan went to Europe last Spring, he approached the English HMV company with the idea and promptly sold them on it. Knowing Cortot's interest and knowledge of Debussy's music and having him under contract, the enterprising English recording company wisely asked him to participate also.

Miss Teyte is the only singer Debussy ever trained in the singing of his songs. This fact is contrary to what most music-lovers believe, for the erroneous impression has been circulated for some years that Mary Garden was the only singer ever coached by Debussy in that branch of his art. True, Miss Garden made some early recordings of Debussy's

songs, with the composer at the piano, back in 1906 or 1907, but, according to friends of the composer, Miss Garden was never coached by Debussy in the performance of those songs.

"Miss Teyte was not only a pupil of Debussy's," says Mr. Brogan, "she was also a close friend. She has sung Melisande, with great success both in Europe and, I believe, in this country. She was also coached in this role by Debussy, as well as in the interpretation of his songs. Miss Teyte possesses in my estimation one of the most luscious soprano voices that I know, one ideally suited to the interpretation of Debussy's vocal music, for its nuance and color are both rare and extraordinary. A pupil of Jean De Reszke's, Miss Teyte has had a most artistic schooling."

## Stokowski As Wagner

Guess what? The latest gossip in musical circles says that our eminent blond maestro, Leopold Stokowski, is leaving for Hollywood sometime in December to don a wig in order to play the part of the temperamental Richard Wagner in a movie. According to rumor, Stokowski has been after the movie moguls for several months to have them feature *him* in the stellar role.

## New Society Issues

The latest developments in the "Society" releases are a first album in a newly formed *Mozart Chamber Music Society*, and a new *Beethoven Piano Sonata* set containing the famous *Hammerklavier Sonata, Opus 106*, played by Artur Schnabel.

The Mozart album contains three violin and piano sonatas—the *C major, K. 296*, the *G major, K. 379*, and the *E flat major, K. 481*. All three are performed by Simon Goldberg and Lilli Krauss. English Parlophone is sponsoring the records, which number in this case seven.

Speaking of Mozart—Mme. Roesgen-Champion, the French harpsichordist, has recorded one of his *Concertos for Harpsichord and Orchestra (Allegro, Andante and Rondo)*, and a *Rondo* from his *Concerto in C major* for *Pathé*—two 12 inch discs.

### Beethoven's Piano Sonatas

Schnabel has taken six discs to play his version of the *Hammerklavier Sonata*. This would seem an unnecessary extension since Wilhelm Kempff has only taken five in his recording of the same work for Polydor. However, judgment on this score must be reserved until we hear the two recordings. The complaint that Schnabel's recordings in the past have been unnecessarily extended is not by any means, however, an unjustified one.

Speaking of Beethoven Piano Sonatas, it is welcome news to hear that the Dutch pianist Egon Petri has recorded the *E minor*, Opus 90, for English Columbia.

### New Symphony Recordings

The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra has been utilized recently for two major symphonic recordings. Under Felix Weingartner's direction the orchestra plays Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* (Columbia label), and under Bruno Walter's direction the same orchestra gives us Brahms' *Third Symphony* (HMV-label). The domestic release of these two recordings will undoubtedly be impatiently awaited by American record buyers, for Weingartner is widely respected as an eminent Beethovenian and Walter as an appreciative Brahmsian.

### Bayreuth Recordings

At the 1936 Bayreuth Festival, the German record company Telefunken procured some recordings of excerpts from the various performances. Although the material duplicates what is already available on records these discs are particularly valuable for their extraordinarily vivified recording. The selections, which are from *Die Walküre*, *Lohengrin* and *Siegfried*, engage the services of Maria Müller and Franz Völker among others. They include the *Love-Duet* from Act I of *Die Walküre*, part of the *Love-Duet from Lohengrin*, *Lohengrin's Farewell* and *Grail-song*, the *King's Prayer* and the *Procession to the Minister* from the same opera, and the *Forest Murmurs* and the *Forging of the Sword from Siegfried* with Max Lorenz in the role of *Siegfried*.

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### The Importance of Fauré

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of musically deeper settings of the same poems. One tends, therefore, to approach Fauré's *Prison* with the conviction that nothing can be added to the despairing ut-

terance of Hahn. Yet Fauré most decidedly has added another great and poignant setting, again proving the infinite possibilities of the tonal art. We cannot leave this hasty discussion of Volume 3 without a passing reference to the lovely and characteristic *Soir*.

But perhaps the chief contribution of Fauré to the literature of song is his Opus 61, *La bonne chanson*. We might call this cycle the apotheosis of the *Lied française*. We must resist the temptation to go into detail, and merely call attention to a few of the beauties with which these songs are filled. Perhaps more strongly here than anywhere else he shows his ability to make the final line of a poem count — an ability he shares with the Germans Franz and Wolf. Thus in the second of these songs — the triumphantly flowing *Puisque l'aube grandit*, he makes a thrilling thing of the ending — *Et vraiment je ne veux pas d'autre paradis*. An atmosphere of calm is the distinctive feature of *La lune blanche* (which again invites comparison with the well-worn but lovely Hahn song); the climax on the 6-4 chord is as moving as though the device were a new one. The fourth song contains a striking underscoring of the word *joie*, and the fifth is notable for the contrast in the line *Que je vous aime — que je t'aime!* A word should also be said for the moving *N'est-ce pas?* and the really thrilling finale, *L'hiver a cessé*. Unfortunately the recent HMV recording of *La bonne chanson* is not too satisfactory. First of all there is the Le Boucher orchestration, in which much of the charm of the piano accompaniments is lost. Secondly, Mme. Suzanne Stappen, who sings the songs, seems to have no conception at all of the meaning of the poems. A singer whose enunciation of the word *joie* is so completely matter-of-fact is hardly an adequate interpreter of Fauré.

Passing over the two late cycles, *Le jardin clos* and *L'horizon chimérique* (which latter group of miniature sea-scapes has been beautifully recorded by Panzéra — HMV DB-4972), let us glance hurriedly at the piano works. First to claim our attention is the lovely, somewhat Chopinesque *Ballade*, Opus 19, for piano and orchestra. Though said to have been inspired by the *Waldweben* in *Siegfried*, I fail to find any Wagnerism in it. More apparent is the foretaste of the works that stem from this *Ballade*, Marguerite Long and a symphony orchestra conducted by Philippe Gaubert have made a splendid recording of this work for Columbia (Set X-62).

(To Be Completed Next Month)

# Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in this Issue: **A. P. De Weese, William Kozlenko, Philip Miller, Peter Hugh Reed and Irving Kolodin of the N. Y. Evening Sun (Guest Reviewer)**

## ORCHESTRAL

**HAYDN:** *Symphony in E flat, No. 99*; played by London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set No. 264, three discs, price \$5.00.

**BEECHAM**, like Toscanini, seeks detailed perfection in performance; and like the famous Italian maestro, who demands numerical arithmetical precision, he too seeks and obtains a linear subtlety which is both vivifying and ingratiating. Both men seem veritably to breathe with the shaping of the music, to sense its inner life, its greater well-being. Hence, under their direction all is perspicuous and purposeful.

From the beginning of the present Haydn *E flat*, Beecham's admiration of the music is evident. He molds and shapes each phrase with fine consideration. This is rare artistry—the kind that the unperceptive listener is apt to pass up, for only those who have eyes to see behind the external lines of a rare frieze have ears to hear beneath the lines of such music-making.

The present symphony is the tenth of the celebrated twelve that Haydn composed for Salomon and his London concerts. It dates from 1793. It is one of Haydn's greatest symphonies—not by virtue of its thematic inventiveness, but by token of his genius to make ordinary material live and sound distinctive by the spontaneity and inevitability of its development.

Haydn is most serious in his introduction, but there is mellowed assurance here and also a fine objective romanticism. From this introduction he sails into his first movement proper (about an inch from the beginning of record one)—a *Vivace*, well marked, for its exuberance is such that even an *Allegro assai* would have been incorrect marking. The movement follows the sonata form with one important alteration—the recapitulation or return to the opening section is not literally repeated. Tovey tells us in his notes on this work that “Haydn says in his recapitulations what Beethoven says in his codas,” and further marks

this as a striking example. Relative to the majestic slow movement, Tovey tells us that “this *Adagio* is typical of that greatness in Haydn which moved Cherubini to tears, and that freedom which taught Beethoven's inmost soul more than he, the uncouth pupil could learn from Haydn the tired teacher.” Beecham plays this movement with especial care.

Capriciousness is the keynote of the Minuet; and comedy is the keynote of the finale. The surprise of the finale is the fugged development. The student of form will enjoy analysing this movement.

As to the recording—it owns about as fine a semblance of realism as is obtainable these days without undue exaggeration of dynamics. An all-around outstanding release, which almost any music lover would loudly welcome as an addition to the record library.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

**MENDELSSOHN:** *Scherzo*, from *Octet*, and **CHOPIN:** *Militaire Polonaise* (orchestrated by Alexander Glazounoff); played by the Boston “Pops” Orchestra, under the direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor record No. 11947, price \$1.50.

IT is gratifying to note the appearance on records of this delightful *Scherzo* by Mendelssohn. The gratification is double, for Mr. Reed and I suggested to Mr. Fiedler, (who would eventually no doubt have brought it out himself), to hurry and record this work. The *Scherzo* is, indeed, one of the most representative examples of this master's whimsical and refreshing style of composition, and, no less an authority than the distinguished Sir Donald Tovey—who is usually accurate in his cool-headed estimates—says of this piece that it reveals Mendelssohn's happy musical characteristics at their best.

This *Scherzo* is originally from Mendelssohn's *Octet*—an important work which should, incidentally, be made available on records. The event which produced the orchestral version of the *Scherzo* is worth citing. On the 25th day of May, 1829, Mendelssohn,



being then only a mere lad of 20, conducted one of his early symphonies at a Philharmonic concert in London. Before producing it, he arrived at the conclusion that its *Minuet* was perhaps not very interesting, and so he swiftly arranged the *Scherzo* from the Octet for orchestra to take its place. Needless to say the *Scherzo* became an immediate success. Tovey says that "the orchestral version is quite as wonderful as the original, and it would be impossible to guess that it had ever existed in another form. . . . The whole piece drifts by in an intense pianissimo and the lightest of staccatos (not so intense and not so light in the Fiedler recording). Its first theme is a mere formula asserting the key after the manner of Scarlatti."

Whether you like Mendelssohn or not, listen to the music. I am certain that, after you have heard it, you will want to own it.

On the other hand, my enthusiasm for this disc by Fiedler is abated by the Chopin transcription on the other side. I have had always a distinct antipathy against the transcription of Chopin's works for the orchestra. Though the *Polonaise Militaire*, which invariably figures as a worthy war-horse on almost every pianist's program, was arranged by none other than the late Glazounoff, my dislike nevertheless has not been assuaged. Chopin's *genre* is essentially pianistic, and no amount of ornate instrumental padding can obviate this original intention. We can conjecture that Fiedler was not responsible for this coupling, for he is too sound a musician to conjoin such extremes on one disc.

Needless to say the orchestra and the recording are more than adequate.

—W. K.

\* \* \* \*

ROSSINI: *La Cenerentola*—*Overture*; played by the Milan Symphony Orchestra, direction of Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia disc, No. 68739-D, price \$1.50.

**T**HE scarcity of coloratura-contraltos who can not only sing but look the part of *Cinderella*, is reason enough for the neglect of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* by impressarios today. It had a brief return to life several years ago, as a vehicle for the late Conchita Supervia, but it did not reach America, and has not been heard here for many years.

Written one year later than *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, the opera is considered only second among Rossini's works in sparkle and charm. However, it is the *Overture* which keeps the work from being forgotten today. And now

for the first time this *Overture* finds its way to the domestic lists. Full of ebullieny and life, it is very characteristic of the style of this composer.

Cav. Molajoli brings us the music, complete with crescendos, in a spirited and enthusiastic performance, and the orchestra plays neatly in the best Italian manner. The record is worthy of Columbia.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

TRADITIONAL: *Prayer of Thanksgiving* (Old Dutch air); and *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes* (arr. by A. Pochon); played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 4322, price \$1.00.

Here are two old song favorites in orchestral dress for the delight of those who do not care for singing. The arrangements are simple enough, indeed, so that they could be used for choral accompaniment. Most people, however, will probably prefer to listen.

The *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, seasonable at this time, is taken from the *Nederlandsche Gedenck-clanck*, a collection of Dutch folk-songs published in the seventeenth century by Adrianus Valerius. It is familiar to most of us in the choral arrangement made by Eduard Kremser, and the Bostonian version is merely an orchestration of that setting. The grand old tune grows bigger with each repetition, and emerges triumphant, as do also the orchestra and conductor. Aside from an *accelerando* in the coda, where it is customary to broaden, the reading follows tradition.

On the reverse side the strings of the orchestra give us the Pochon arrangement of *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*, which was recorded some years ago by the Flonzaley Quartet. Again the sheer beauty of the melody, which time and familiarity have not tarnished, and the shimmering quality of the string tone, make the recording a welcome one, though in this song we do miss the words.

The Boston "Pops" Orchestra has yet to make a poor recording.

—P. M.

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TWO ANCIENT LITURGICAL MELODIES (*Transcribed by Leopold Stokowski*) and played by the Philadelphia orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Victor disc 10 inch, No. 1789, price \$1.50.

**STOKOWSKI'S** phobia for transcriptions of old music has now given us an orchestral arrangement of *Two Ancient Liturgical Melodies*. There is no clue regarding the identity

or source of these pieces, and none in fact is necessary, since many such compositions were conceived anonymously for specific Church services.

The modality of these two melodies is based on the system of the Gregorian Chant. And in this is the inconsistency imposed upon by transcription. The Gregorian modalities are mainly severe, ascetic, pure. Almost every embellishment is carefully eschewed. It is music that is ostensibly dedicated to a high spiritual service. That is why the human voice and not instruments were utilized by the Church composers. Of course, one can hardly consider it a factor of desecration in transcribing liturgical music for secular instruments, but one cannot deny the fact that the essential religious, solemn feeling is thereby lost. It is dressed up in modern paint and powder, with artificial touches of theatricality, and the feeling is therefore suggested and implied rather than articulated and actually felt. Bach lends himself more to Stokowski's luscious emendations; but certainly not liturgical music. Here he alters instead of adding something new; in this style of musical art he becomes an agnostic, as it were, rather than a believer, whilst the modern orchestration does nothing except to remove us from the quiet ecstasy of a simple yet rabid faith.

The desire to achieve temperamental effects nullifies the intrinsic emotion of the music's purity. One can therefore hardly condone Stokowski's introduction of bells in his version in order to produce what, I gather, is supposed to be a mood of religious contemplation. The touch, I regret to say, is a little too theatrical. Why bells? Why the overstuffed basses and celli panting their way through one half of the record. The orchestration is far too thick for these simple tunes, far too glamorous for the quiet mood. After all, this music is nothing like Wagner's *Lohengrin* or *Parsifal*, where religious moods are also part of the essence of the drama. But there it is required. Wagner himself wanted this sinewy instrumentation. But Liturgical music is supposed to represent the extreme opposite. However, in spite of my impatient feeling in the matter, I cannot help but like what Stokowski does with an orchestra. Though more over-stuffed than lean, his work and feeling are almost always marked by originality and genius. It is these, no doubt, that obviously make him such a vital force in our contemporary musical life, and it is these, also, that will hasten his many adherents—of which I am one—to buy this, his latest recording.

—W. K.

## CONCERTOS

BEETHOVEN: *Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 61*; played by Fritz Kreisler and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction John Barbirolli. Victor set M325, six discs (11 sides), price \$11.00.

AFTER the *Fourth Piano Concerto* the *Rasoumofsky Quartets*, after the *Rasoumofsky Quartets* the *Fourth Symphony*, and after that lovely work the gigantic *Violin Concerto*. So goes the creative genius of the Titan in the year 1806, his thirty-sixth in his earthly sojourn. The opening has always been pounced upon as a master stroke: five strokes of the Titan's gavel. He calls his court to order with great solemnity. He has something to say, and we are bidden to listen. With quiet dignity he begins, and then the gavel repeats its knocks. There is a long dissertation before the entrance of the eminent protagonist. We are informed at some length of what he will have to say and then with considerable assurance and unusual dramatic *aplomb* he enters upon the scene.

It is curious that Beethoven should have introduced the solo instrument in the *tutti* of his *Fourth* and *Fifth Piano Concertos* and not in his *Violin Concerto*. This is particularly puzzling if we accept Bekker's theory that the *Violin Concerto* forms a connecting link between the *G major Concerto* and its poetic complement, the powerful *E flat Concerto, Opus 73*, composed three years later. The fact that Beethoven later differentiates the violin part from the broad orchestral prelude would seem to have permitted the introduction of the solo instrument earlier. However, the inevitability of this music cannot be attacked.

The virtuoso qualities of the *Violin Concerto* place it closer to the "Emperor" *Concerto* than to the *Fourth in G major*. And yet the limpid qualities of the music are such that no man has attached a useless sobriquet to it. Beethoven, the innovator, speaks to us from the pages of the first movement. Few people of today are disturbed or even unduly impressed with the drum at the start or the unexplained D sharps which follow. We take so much for granted nowadays, and Beethoven's novelties are no longer regarded as such. Most people who listen to this music are primarily concerned with the soloist, not what goes on before or back of him.

The first movement is of great length, but it is not really padded. Although Beethoven gives his soloist plenty of opportunities to show his technical accomplishments, he does not pander to these sort of things. By key changes and by deft harmonic touches to his decorations, he keeps the music always interesting. In the concert hall the long first movement seems less exacting to the listener than in a recording, where six separated parts are concerned. Five record changes require a closer concentration, but the fact that distracting neighbors are absent should be completely compensating. Cadenzas are traditional to such works as this, but their value has been and will always be, as far as I am concerned, questionable. After all, Beethoven supplied plenty of decoration of the technical kind in the music proper, for he knew the full meaning of the word concerto and he not only realized that meaning but improved upon it. Kreisler's cadenza is interestingly constructed, however, and his playing of it is, needless to say, superb.

The simple poetic beauty of the slow movement inevitably arrests. It has qualities which are beyond description and when played as it is here it leaves one speechless. Beethoven worshipped beauty, yes, but beauty made more vital by preeminent masculine sentiment. The cantilena of the second theme is an example of his realization of such beauty in tone.

The finale following the dictates of his time is a lively Rondo, in which the ingenuity of the composer is evident at almost every turn.

Kreisler's tone in this recording is unusually full and rich. His playing of this work, however, is marred by a curious lack of assurance at times, and frequent deviations from pitch. There is at the same time a richness and a maturity of expression in his performance that cannot be disparaged. His first issue of this concerto was a better performance, but a poorly balanced recording. Its clarity, its tonal qualities and its dynamics were not veritable. As a recording the present set is a tribute not alone to him but to the recording engineers that officiated in the work of transcribing the performance of one of the great violinists in one of the greatest violin works of all times.

The fact that there are three great interpretations of this work on records today — Szigeti's, Huberman's and Kreisler's — raises the old question of which is the best. I nibble at the bait, but I can assure you I will not bite. Like all musicians, or critics of music — as you wish, I enjoy a variety of interpre-

tation when it comes to music of this calibre. And once again I think of the dangers of worshipping too well a single recording of this kind of music. Szigeti's performance of this concerto is beautifully realized—so much so that I think of it as almost unmatched when I listen to it. As for Huberman's, I cannot answer. It has been highly praised in Europe, so perhaps the same feeling may be engendered. The appeal of Szigeti may be a quite different one than that made by Kreisler, but that does not say it is nonetheless veritable. If a choice must be made, it must be a personal one with each record buyer.

Although Barbirolli, at the helm of the London Philharmonic, again distinguishes himself for the eloquence of his orchestral background, I wish he had made more of the opening of the concerto. Those drum beats may be marked piano, but they are too important to be submerged or lost. Bruno Walter in the Szigeti recording catches our attention immediately with them.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \* \*

MILHAUD: *Concerto pour piano et orchestre* (3 sides); played by Mme. Marguerite Long and Orchestra National, direction of Darius Milhaud; and 1. *Saudades do Brazil: Paysandu*, 2. *L'automne: Alfama*; played by Mme. Long. Two Columbia discs, Nos. 68737-D, 68738-D, price, \$3.00.

**WRITING** of the premiere of Milhaud's *Piano concerto*, which took place in Paris early in 1935, Arthur Hoeree described it as coming like a "breath of fresh air" on an otherwise dull program. It does not, however, need such a setting to emphasize the breeziness of its first and last movements. The composer has something to say, and thoroughly enjoys saying it. He has mastered his idiom and the form in which he has chosen to write, and now he goes about the business of expressing himself. Of how many contemporary composers can this be said?

The *Concerto* begins boldly, with an upward rush in the piano part, and sustains its high spirits throughout the first movement. There are countless rhythmic felicities, and one mocking little phrase which recalls Carrie Jacobs Bond, though even such a recollection here only adds to the merriment. The second movement (each section fits neatly on one record side) begins rather mysteriously in the woodwinds, but with the entrance of the piano, breaks into a surging and soaring *barcarolle*, rich in melody. Gradually the music spends itself, then revives momentarily

in a shimmering *coda*. The *Finale* is all vigor and joyous life. Contrapuntal in texture, it voices the healthy and exuberant spirit of the composer. There are contrasting passages, like sighs, in the woodwinds against piano arabesques, but only in passing—the work ends brilliantly.

Certainly French Columbia must lead the world in recording important new works by the artists who introduce them. This may be due in part to the fact that so many outstanding premieres take place in Paris, but it must be, in some measure at least, owing to the very active participation of Columbia artists. Marguerite Long was the first to play this *Concerto*, and her performance was surely a factor in its success. Under the direction of the composer she here repeats her stunning proclamation of the music. The orchestra, too, is excellent.

On the odd side the pianist plays selections from two of the same composer's piano *suites*, and here, again, she is superb. The two short pieces contrast well with each other and with the *Concerto*, but all are alike in displaying the ability and sincerity of composer and pianist. This is a set well worth owning.

—P. M.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

SCHUBERT: *String Quartet in D minor*, (*Death and the Maiden*), Opus Posth.; played by the Roth String Quartet. Columbia set, 5 discs (9 sides), price \$7.00.

THE existing recordings of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden Quartet* all date back to early electrical recording, so this set is no mere duplication but an essential realization of one of the most important works in its particular genre. Comparison with earlier recordings is really superfluous because none of its predecessors have the dynamic coloration that this set owns — hence none realizes the performers' playing as truthfully and as fully as this one.

Schubert's lovely *A minor Quartet* and the present *Quartet in D Minor* were both written in the Spring of 1824, at a time when Schubert considered himself the "most unhappy and wretched creature in the world." The loneliness he felt is evidenced in both works, but it is more strongly evinced in the *D minor* where the inner unity of the work is better realized than in the *A minor*.

The second movement is founded upon the composer's song, *Death and the Maiden*.

Hence the sobriquet by which the quartet is best known. It is, of course, a series of variations, deeply expressive despite its extreme simplicity of form and filled with great tonal beauty. It might be well to point out to the listener that the usage of this song was not suggested to Schubert by an outsider, as in the case of the *Trout quintet*, but was a motivation that came from within himself, and probably has considerable to do with the content of Claudius' poem. It would definitely suggest that Schubert not only thought upon *Death*, but that he anticipated it. I give the poem here, so that the significance of the music, as the composer undoubtedly felt it can be better ascertained.

(The Maiden) Pass on, pass on, wild man with  
skinless bone!

I'm a young girl, so away! And leave the young  
alone.

(Death) Give my thy hand, my fair and tender  
child!

I come as friend, not to chasten.

Be with good mirth; I am not wild,

So sweetly in my arms sleep!

There is expressed in Schubert's music founded on this song a beautiful resignation, for as Cobbett says the gloomy scene is "lightened on the approach of *Death as the Friend*." It has been suggested by one writer that the latter variations represent the "Dance of *Death*," and that the *Scherzo* is "death as the *Demon fiddler*." Wagner may have drawn some inspiration for his first act of *Siegfried* from this *Scherzo*, for certainly the opening theme recalls *Mime* and the *Anvil* motive.

The Roths play this work with fine precision and elasticity. Although their performance is forthright, it is at the same time full of nuance. Particularly fine is the delicate and lucent work of *Feri Roth* (the leader) in the variations.

The recording of this work is sharply etched on the high side, the emphasis being laid on the violins. The cello should have had more prominence; for the balance at times is none too equitable. However, the recording is clear and lifelike, and since the music is so splendidly played, it will unquestionably find many friends.

—P. H. R.

BOCCHERINI: *Quartet in A Major*, Opus 33, No. 6; played by the Kreiner Quartet. The Friends of Recorded Music discs Nos. 1 and 2.

DURING the course of a not over-lengthy life, Luigi Boccherini found time to write 102 quartets, and a slightly larger number

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# Beethoven



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# Concerto for Violin *in D Major*

*Played by* **FRITZ KREISLER**

and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by John Barbirolli

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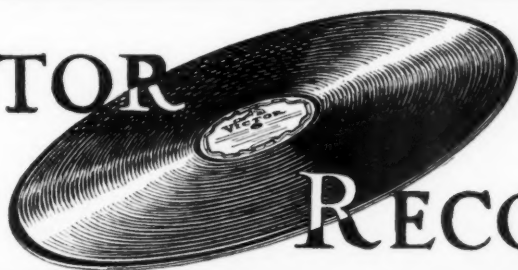
Four portentous strokes on the kettle drums, and the magic music of Beethoven's Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra moves into its first softly stated theme by violins and woodwinds. Soon comes a brilliant flight by the solo violin, beginning a display of technical virtuosity which never overshadows the nobility of

concept which characterizes this great Beethoven work. Beethoven not only fulfilled the most rigid classical requirements of the concerto . . . but also clairvoyantly foresaw the modern ideals of this musical form . . . creating a concerto of magnificent and timeless beauty.

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## VICTOR



## RECORDS

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of quintets. Of course, these total to only half of the general estimate for the complete number of his instrumental works — Pohl, in Grove's Dictionary offers the figure of 467 — but it does seem that the phonograph has treated him rather shabbily. There is a choice of some two dozen versions of the threadbare *Minuet*, but this is meagre consolation to the music-lover seeking for at least one complete work by him. Verily, Boccherini may be described as the greatest of unplayed composers.

The *Friends of Recorded Music* have contrived to make their introduction to the phonograph world an auspicious one by presenting the only complete recording of a Boccherini Quartet now available. Such sources as there are concerning Boccherini tell us that this *A Major Quartet* was written in 1781, which would place it about midway in his mature career (he began to write about 1765 and died in 1805) but who can gauge the point of development it represents, knowing so little about the rest of his output?

It does seem incredible, however, that there was ever a time in musical history when such music as this could have been considered perplexing or complex. Nevertheless, so late as 1776 (Mozart was already twenty years old) the musicologist Junker could write in his *Twenty Composers* that Boccherini was "dark and indistinct", that he delighted in "unnecessary complications," that on the whole, his music evoked "horror." Perhaps this recording should really have been sponsored by the New Music Society!

For ears less benighted, Boccherini is a composer almost painfully good-humored, with an infinite mastery of his craft, whose audaciousness in the use of musical materials is frequently astounding. Note, for example, the shrewd use of a pedal point at the close of the *andantino* in this quartet (not to mention the adventurous chromaticism of the movement itself) which leads to the *Menuetto*. Here the organ point shifts from E to A, and gives a coloration to the movement which is wholly unusual. Yes, there are many things more extraordinary in Bach, but how much of Bach's music did Boccherini know? Even less, it is likely, than we know of Boccherini.

It is precisely this element of musical ingenuity that contains the largest part of Boccherini's interest for us today. The individuality of his mind is expressed not by the contour of his themes, or the range of his emotions, but largely by the texture and sound of his writing, by his willingness to experiment with the physical elements of

music, by the excellence of the taste and sensitivity on which his unconventionality was founded. This *A Major Quartet* is neither profoundly emotional nor irresistibly gay; it is, however, an extraordinary evidence of the manner in which the language of music is expanded.

The recording also introduces to record collectors the Kreiner Quartet (Shulman, Robbins, Kreiner and Shulman) whose qualities are singularly well-suited to such music as this. The body of tone produced by the group is clean and firm; they make no attempt to inflate the music beyond its essential dimensions. They have also been favored with a generally good recording, though a deficiency of the recording system would seem to have produced several tonal blemishes in the *Menuet* and the *Presto Assai*. No doubt such deficiencies will be remedied in future releases by the *Friends of Recorded Music*. They are to be complimented on the quality of the surfaces, which are more nearly silent than any previously produced by a domestic organization. It should also be noted that the wide center margins on all the records does not indicate duplicity on the part of the manufacturers; a cut of 120 to the inch has been used, and the length of each side is thus legitimate.

For those who are concerned about such matters, a previously designated number of each release will be marked "first pressing". Subsequent issues will be identified in the manner of ordinary reprints of books. It is to be hoped, however, that no attempt will be made to inflate the price of the records by a policy of artificial scarcity, in the manner of those Society releases which are now no longer available. So long as the matrices exist, records should be purchasable at a fixed price. Annual membership in the organization carries with it the privilege of purchasing releases by the *Friends of Recorded Music* at \$1.50 a record, or fifty cents less than the over-the-counter price.

—Irving Kolodin.

## PIANO and HARPSICHORD

BIZET: *Carmen fantasia* (Arr. by Busoni); played by Egon Petri, Columbia disc, No. 68740-D, price \$1.50.

WHETHER the choice actually lies with the artist or his public, the fact remains that the old operatic *fantasia*, *potpourri*, *selection*, or, if you will, *symphonic synthesis*, is with us still. And of all the operas which have been so treated, surely *Carmen* must rank as the most worked-over.

As such things go, the Busoni *Fantasia* is a very good sample. It does manage to avoid many of the more obvious airs, though to be sure the *Habanera*, the *Flower song* and the *March* are in evidence. More restrained than some such numbers, the *Fantasia* yet contains plenty to interest the student of piano technique.

I have had occasion before to praise both Mr. Petri's art and the quality of its reproduction by Columbia. All that has been said can be said again, and with it let us express a hope for a chance to admire these things in some music less definitely "vehicular."

—P. M.

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CHOPIN: *Etude in C Sharp Minor, Opus 10, No. 4; Etude in G Flat Major (Black-Key Etude) Opus 10, No. 5; Mazurka in C Sharp Minor, Opus 50, No. 3*, played by Vladimir Horowitz, piano. Victor disc number 14140, price \$2.00.

This single disc contains three piano pieces—of diverse value—by Chopin, and played by the inimitable Horowitz in his usual brilliant technical fashion. Little is missing here except, perhaps, the actual sight of the dark boyish figure seated at the piano and dashing off with mannered ease these two difficult compositions. One can never deny the fact of this pianist's unusual technical equipment; all pianistic difficulties melt, as it were, under his burning fingers, but they quickly congeal sometimes into a lump of cold, solid mass. In other words, though these *Etudes* are intended for brilliant performance—to which intention Horowitz religiously conforms—he injects little sensuous warmth in them. His playing is studied and controlled; qualities, certainly, to be admired. But one quickly fatigues even at ornate technical trappings, especially when there is little emotional contrast to break their monotony.

Conversely, the *Mazurka in C Sharp Minor* (which, I understand, receives its first performance on records) is rendered with more than adequate sympathy. Horowitz catches the Polish spirit, the poetry and warmth of this national dance as exemplified by Chopin's genius, and plays the piece with penetrating insight. Here is emotional contrast as well as technical manipulation.

I, for one, would very much welcome an entire album of *Etudes* or *Mazurkas* played by Horowitz. I wonder why the recording company does not pursue this point to advantage.

The present recording is ample in sonority and reminiscent of the dynamics of the concert hall.

—W. K.

# MUSIC

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ZIPOLI: *Pastorale*; and SCHUBERT: *Wohin?* (both transcribed for two pianos by A. Kelberine); played by Jeanne Behrend and Alexander Kelberine. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 1790, price, \$1.50.

**T**HERE seems to be a demand for two-piano recordings, but not enough to justify undertaking any genuine two-piano literature. One thinks instinctively of Arensky, whose *Suites* have been represented only by isolated movements. Rachmaninoff has fared better, but his *Suite*, if memory serves, is the only two-piano album set to be had. Why there should be a greater demand for the sort of thing we find on this disc is something I can account for only on the grounds of brevity and price.

Domenico Zipoli, appearing, I believe, for the first time on records, was a much admired composer born in Naples about 1675. This *Pastorale* is taken from a series of *Sonatas* indiscriminately designated as for harpsichord or organ—though in the case of the *Pastorale* the pedal-points indicate clearly enough that the piece is meant for the latter instruments. It makes a very pleasant if not indispensable addition to two-piano music.

The transcription of Schubert's familiar song seems far less necessary. *Wohin*, has been treated simply enough, with the melody in octaves over the rippling accompaniment. Aside from some tampering with note values in one spot, no violence has been done the song. As in most voice and piano records, however, the accompaniment is too far in the background. The performance is none too vital.

—P. M.

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BACH: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor*; *Six Little Preludes*; *Partita in B Flat*; played by Wanda Landowska, harpsichord. Victor set No. 323, price \$8.00.

**T**HERE is such a dearth of good harpsichordists today that comparisons between one and another, though usually odious, are in order. But by means of the illuminating revelation of records one can bide his time in arriving at definite or general conclusions regarding the diverse merits in playing and interpretation between one harpsichordist and another. There are in fact no more than two or three harpsichodists making records today; but, when everything is considered between them, none emerges to compare in artistry with Wanda Landowska. It is natural that a reviewer may, on the spur of the moment, be carried away by a performance

or a composition, and commend an obviously inferior executant to the listener's attention. A swift flash of enthusiasm on the part of the over-zealous critic may undoubtedly result in an estimate which, after an interim of reflection, may be refracted as having been either absurd or too far-fetched. But no such critical retraction, I feel, regarding the work of Wanda Landowska. On the contrary, the writer will be more inclined perhaps to confirm rather than deny his initial approbation. It is enough to declare that, although there are other worthy harpsichordists today, there is none like Landowska. She is a consummate artist, a profound musician, as well as a trustworthy performer. Others may possess one or two of her remarkable gifts, but, like Toscanini in his sphere, it is questionable whether they possess all.

This album of records is interesting for various reasons. First, because two compositions (*Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* and *Partita in B Flat*) are recorded for the piano by Edwin Fischer and Harold Samuel, respectively, for Victor. There are advantages to be said for both interpretative instruments, i. e., the harpsichord and the piano. Where the piano has a larger dynamic range, a more sustained amplitude, a greater register of expression, the harpsichord, also, has its own unique coloration. The contrapuntal voices are more decisive, the melodic lines more clearly accented, and the instrument, because of its obvious lightness and resonance, lends itself better to certain parts of both these compositions. For instance, the harpsichord is capable of giving us two different versions of a same repeated section. There is more contrast, more shading. This is particularly evident when Madame Landowska repeats the *Courante* and the *Minuets* in the *Partita*. The first time she achieves an effect of legato-playing, the second time she plays the same section in a decisive staccato manner. This difference, of course, can be produced on the piano, but it will not be so clearly emphasized. The *Chromatic Fantasy*, however, is better adapted to the range of the piano. The lack of suitable crescendos, diminuendos, and other nuances of dynamics tends to make the harpsichord version slightly monotonous. But in here again we have obvious advantages which cannot be effected by the piano: clarity of melodic line, decisiveness, contrasts in shading, the splitting of contrapuntal voices, etc.

The *Six Little Preludes*, which have not been recorded as a whole, are new to discs. The pamphlet, enclosed with the album, tells

us that they give various opportunities to the harpsichordist to exploit the charming if meagre resources of the instrument; a conclusion we hasten to verify.

There is no doubt in the reviewer's mind that this collection is an interesting as well as a valuable contribution to harpsichord recordings. The mere fact that these pieces have been recorded by Wanda Landowska should be sufficient to warrant owning the set.

—W. K.

\* \* \* \* \*

COLONIAL MUSIC: *Two minuets* — 1792,

1. *Danced before George Washington*, 2. *Danced before Martha Washington* (Pierre Landrin Duport); and 1. *Minuet*, 2. *Gavotte* (A. Reinagle—edited by W. Oliver Strunk); played by Yella Pessl, Columbia ten-inch disc, No. 17072-D, price \$1.00.

HERE is a Christmas gift for the true patriot, though the interest is not confined to 100% Americans. Though of great historical importance, if you are interested in Americana, it happens at the same time to be music — if not great music.

Pierre Landrin Duport was a dancing master who came over from France in 1790, and lived in this country until his death about 1840. It seems to have taken him, then, only two years to attain the honor of having his music and dancing performed before the Washingtons. The *Minuets* are graceful, and have the proper atmosphere of rustling silk. I particularly like the *trio* of Mrs. Washington's piece.

Alexander Reinagle was an important figure in our early musical life. He came here from England in 1786, and took a prominent place in the artistic life of New York and later Philadelphia. He was active as pianist, singer, conductor and operatic impressario. His music, if not strikingly original, is well made and can still be heard with pleasure. There is an especially charming bass line in the little *Gavotte* which Miss Pessl has recorded.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

OLD CHRISTMAS MUSIC: 1. *Vom Himmel hoch*, 2. *Puer natus*, v. *O Jesulein suess* (Samuel Scheidt); and 1. *Aria pastrella*, 2. *The shepherd's call* (Valentin Rathgeber); played by Yella Pessl, Columbia ten-inch disc, No. 17071-D, price, \$1.00.

COMBINING the spirit of Christmas with that of the harpsichord is so old that it comes as a real novelty. It is a particularly happy thought at this time because of

the genuine and deserved success of Yella Pessl as a recording artist. Further, it is well planned because the music brings out so strikingly the kinship of the harpsichord to the organ, as opposed to the piano.

The pieces are small in every respect save charm and the opportunities they offer to display the capabilities and characteristics of the instrument. The three chorale melodies are played with no elaboration and the two Rathgeber miniatures are musically simple enough. The *Shepherd's call* is my favorite. In it Miss Pessl uses a variety of stops to lend interest to the repetitions.

Aside from a slight obscuring of the melody in *O Jesulein suess*, the playing throughout and the recording are all one could ask. The little disc will make an ideal Christmas gift, not only because it is seasonable, but because it can be enjoyed the year round.

—P. M.

## VIOLIN

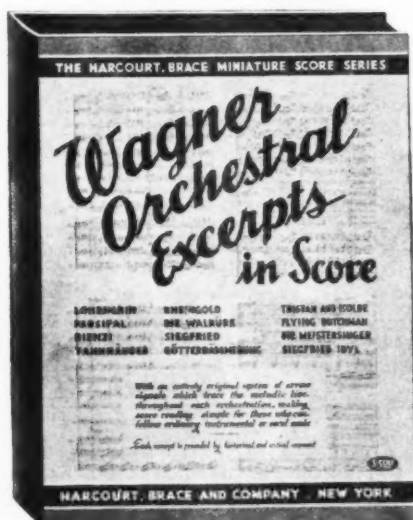
TARTINI: *Devil's Trill Sonata*, played by Albert Spalding, violin, and Andre Benoist, piano, Victor disc, 10 inch, No. 1787, price \$1.50.

THROUGH an error in the distribution of last month's release, and also on my part, no mention was made of the fact that the *Devil's Trill Sonata* by Tartini (reviewed in the November issue) was incomplete. The work, with the addition of the current recording, is now final. What had been noted of the *Sonata* and of Mr. Spalding's playing still applies. To repeat the gist of the review once more: I pointed out that the essential characteristics of Mr. Spalding's interpretation were, on the whole, favorable, though his approach to the music was rather meticulous and academic. I also stressed that it lacked the requisite warmth and richness necessary for a thorough evocation of music of this style; but, in the main, the violinist gives us a commendable musicianly reading. He has an agile technique which enables him to hurdle the many difficulties with manifest ease. Moreover since no good domestic recording of this important violin work exists, one may be inclined to overlook some of these interpretative shortcomings and be grateful that it is at last recorded and available for one's music library.

—W. K.



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The image shows a miniature score excerpt from 'The Ride of the Valkyries'. It features two systems of staves. The first system includes parts for 2 kleine Flöten, 2 große Flöten, 3 Hoboen, Englisch Horn, 3 Klarinetten in A, Bassklarinette in A, 3 Fagotte, 8 Hörner in E, 3 Trompeten in E, 4 Posunen und Kontrabaßtuba, and 4 Pauken. The second system includes 1. Violinen, 2. Violinen, Bratschen, Violoncelle, and Kontrabaß. Arrows are placed above the staves to indicate the melodic line and tremolo figures as described in the text.

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## HARP

SEVERAC: *An Old Music Box*; POENITY: *The Music Box*, and GRANDJANY. *Two French Folk Songs*, played by Mildred Dilling harpist. Columbia disc, 10 inch, No. 17073-D, price \$1.00.

**MISS DILLING** shows her technical ease and taste in the two compositions realistically depicting the music box. Both of the numbers are melodious. It was not surprising to hear the mechanism run down in the latter.

*Le Bon Petit Roi d'Yvetot* and *Et Ron, Ron, Petit Patapon* are both spirited folk-songs that Grandjany has given modern and effective harmonies. Without their words they have no particular meaning, but are quite pleasant to the ear. The second song is already on a Columbia record, played by the harpist Zighera.

—A. P. D.

## OPERA and VOCAL

**BOITO:** *Mefistofele* (Opera in Four Acts)  
Sung in Italian by artists and chorus of the La Scala Opera House, Milano, Italy, with La Scala Orchestra under direction Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia Operatic Set 17, seventeen discs, price \$25.50.

**BOITO** had in his youth spent much time in Paris and Germany, where he was strongly influenced by studying a variety of French and German music. The influence of Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt, can unquestionably be traced in his *Mefistofele*, which he composed after his return to his native land. The opera was first produced in 1868 (the composer's twenty-sixth year) at the La Scala, where its unusual style aroused much comment *pro* and *con*. The anti-Wagnerite faction, then strongly entrenched in Italy, caused the opera however to be withdrawn after two performances. Later, remodeled, it met with success, in Italy in 1875, and in Germany in 1880.

Boito wrote his own libretto for this opera, devising it, of course, from Goethe's *Faust*. He embraces more of the poem than Gounod does, including Mefistofele's further tempting of Faust with the beautiful Helen of Troy. Although Boito had unusual dramatic ability, as his librettos for Verdi's *Otello* and *Falstaff* prove, the inclusion of this latter scene is somewhat confusing to the operatic plot of *Mefistofele*. Boito was chiefly concerned with the character Mefistofele, hence a strong emphasis is laid upon him in this opera; and

certainly Boito created some most effective music for this character.

The opera *Mefistofele* undeniably features the titular role, which is given, as in Gounod's score, to a bass singer. Although the parts of Margherita and of Faust have engaged the services of some famous singers in the sixty-odd years of the opera's existence, it is invariably the role of Mefistofele that remains the stellar part.

The famous Prologue, where Mefistofele addresses a mocking song to the Omnipotent, is a most effective scene: a scene that helps to establish immediately the character in a forceful and unforgettable manner, particularly when the part is taken by an eminent basso. The role has always appealed to great bass singers. In recent years at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, *Mefistofele* has undoubtedly been given to exploit the artistry of such famous basses as Didur, Mardones, and Chaliapin, as much as to exploit similarly such tenors as Riccardo Martin and Gigli, and such sopranos as Farrar and Alda. After Margherita has died and Helen (or Elena, as she is called in Italian) has sung her effective scene, after Faust has voiced his *Giunto sul passo estremo* and dropped dead, it is Mefistofele who dominates the action until the end, and accordingly our memory after the curtain has fallen.

Columbia's recorded version of *Mefistofele* has as its chief protagonist Nazzareno De Angelis, one of the great bass voices of our times—a singer often referred to as the Italian Chaliapin. De Angelis dominates the recording, and after the last record is returned to its album pocket, it is his performance which lives most keenly in our memory. The cast outside of him is not an especially distinguished one, although it is a competent one.

Antonio Melandri (Faust) is a lyric tenor, who sings easily enough, but he does not make Faust a very vital character. Mafalda Favero is a competent but somewhat mature Margherita. Hers is a dramatic soprano voice with the usual vibrato in the lower range encountered so often in Italy. Arangi-Lombardi (Helen), one of the foremost dramatic sopranos in Italy, has been better represented on records than here. The plangent quality of her voice would have been better suited to the role of Margherita in our estimation. However, she sings the music allotted to her with ease and assurance. As in the case of *Falstaff*, Molajoli at the orchestral helm is to be highly commended for his shaping of the whole performance.

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The recording, which dates back several years, is satisfying on the whole. There are some poor surfaces, but this cannot be blamed on domestic Columbia, for Italian recordings have never been known for the most silent record surfaces.

In the review set, part 9 is really part 4 and vice versa.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

**BERLIOZ:** *La Damnation de Faust, Romance de Marguerite (D'amour l'ardente flamme)* — Sung by Yvonne Gall, with orchestra directed by Henri Buesser. Columbia 9117-M, price -1.50.

**MARGUERITE'S** Romance comes from Part Four, Scene 15, of the opera. The words are Berlioz's adaptation of Goethe's song, *Meine Ruh' ist hin, Mein Herz ist schwer*, that we best know as Schubert's song *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. Marguerite is alone in a moonlit room, weeping; she is desolate. Her mood brightens when she thinks of Faust, recalling his nobility and his many attractions. In memory she thrills again to their mutual ex-

change of love, to her happy surrender to his wooing. This happiness passes, and she again complains of her loneliness.

As we first hear it Berlioz's music for this scene seems pale when we remember Schubert's consummate setting of the song. But the more we listen to it the more we recognize that Berlioz, too, felt it deeply, and had the courage to clothe it in music that would not even suggest Schubert. His Marguerite is very femininely weak and pathetic but she does not emerge a compelling tragic type, as does Schubert's Gretchen.

Mlle. Yvonne Gall sings the aria with commendable restraint. Her polished voice, and her intuitive and studied elegance of style create a very human Marguerite, not a stilted operatic figure. We are thankful for this example of fine French music, sung in the best French taste.

The strings and soft woodwinds play an accompaniment that is noticeable for its own beauty, dissociated from the voice.

The recording is good, but not particularly brilliant.

—A. P. D.

CRIST; *Chinese Mother-Goose Rhymes*; sung by Chick Bullock, with Arnold New at the piano. Columbia disc, 10 inch, No. 266-M, price, 75c.

THE American composer Bainbridge Crist, has taken I. T. Headland's translations of Chinese children's songs and given them straight-forward, and not particularly melodious, tunes and simple accompaniments, with touches of piquant exoticism. Chick Bullock sings the words distinctly, and does not try to make the songs pretentious. The tunes are in orthodox Western scales, and the words have a simplicity and humor that should appeal to American children just the same as our own nursery rhymes. The songs on this record are: *What the Old Cow Said, Baby Is Sleeping, Of What Use Is a Girl?, Lady-Bug, The Old Woman, Pat a Cake, and The Mouse.*

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

DEBUSSY: *Fetes galantes, series 1 & 2; Trois chansons de Bilitis; Le promenoir de deux amants (3 songs); Ballade des femmes de Paris; De greve*; performed by Maggie Teyte, soprano, and Alfred Cortot, piano. Seven ten-inch Victor discs in album, Set No. 322, price \$10.50.

THIS set is the answer to one of the prayers of song lovers. There is much to be said in favor of releasing such recordings as these in albums, because of the added dignity of bulk, and also because of the perspective which it is possible to give by representing various phases of the song-compositions of one man. We may assume that the idea is taking hold, as witness Columbia's Franz and Erich Wolff sets, released without benefit of Society, and even the Victor Lotte Lehmann album, which, though it glorified the singer rather than any composer, did follow a chronological sequence. We may regret the absence of a booklet with the present album (we did not receive one)—since words are so integral a part of any art-song, and the hearer whose foreign languages are not equal to following the ideas by ear should be given this help—nevertheless, we cannot but be grateful for these delightful songs so splendidly presented.

Of the interpreters little need be said. Maggie Teyte began her career so young, and has been heard so infrequently in America in recent years, that though she is now in the prime of life and at the very height of her vocal and interpretative powers, her name is something of a legend in this country. She

belongs to that highest type of singer to whom sheer beauty of voice and mastery of vocalism are simply means to the end that she may present the meaning of the music she is singing. Incidentally her voice is a particularly rich and sympathetic one. The ever dependable Cortot is an ideal collaborator.

The set has been well planned to show Debussy's development as a writer of songs. He was not a born composer for the voice, but struggled with the problem of vocal line until he evolved his own idiom. He was gifted neither with the melodic inspiration nor the unflinching feeling for words which characterized Fauré, and in consequence, his songs do not give that feeling of inevitability so strong in the works of the older master. We say of a Fauré song, "It had to be so; it could not be otherwise;" but Debussy leaves us with a sense of unreality—as though we had awakened from a dream. His creatures are never quite real. One can hardly imagine really getting to know Pelléas or Mélisande.

But it is just this quality—this otherworldliness—which we have come to love in Debussy. It is present often even in his earliest gropings, and it reaches full maturity in the *Chansons de Bilitis*, and the other works of his middle period. And though this album contains none of the gropings, it does present an opportunity to watch the development of his vocal line, as well as the increasing freedom of his piano parts.

Beginning with the two sets of Verlaine *Fetes galantes*, the first of which dates from 1892, and the second from 1904, we cannot fail to note a contrast. The first song, *En sourdine*, a really lovely and atmospheric song, contains passages where the phrasing is jerky, since, not having achieved the perfect balance between the words and the melodic line, the composer has shown his favor to the latter. Instrumentally the effect would be right enough, but it increases the demands on the artistry of the singer. Incidentally it should be noted that in this one record side alone the recording setup seems to have been not quite satisfactory. The voice is a bit too forward and there is some loss in atmosphere.

*Fantoches* is sung with great subtlety and lightness, and the balance is much better. *Clair de lune*, an exquisite song, though missing the gentle irony of the Fauré setting, is superbly done. The sustained high passage on the words "Au calme clair de lune . . ." and again "et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau," somehow so expressive of moonlight



and fountains, is ravishingly beautiful in Miss Teyte's voice.

*Les ingénus*, because it was composed later, is a more perfect example of musical prosody, and we find the soprano perhaps even more at home. The quality of her voice in the last line is something to remember. So on through *Le faune*, with its curious drum-beat effect, and the weird *Colloque sentimental*.

The three *Chansons de Bilitis*, set to poems of Pierre Louys, were published in 1899. Belonging to the *Pelléas* period, they are cut of the same cloth as that masterpiece. The declamation is here so natural that we can almost see the girl who is telling us her story. Certainly *La chevelure* is one of the finest of all French songs.

*Le promenoir de deux amants*, again comprising three songs, represents the later period, having been written in 1910. Debussy had now taken a great interest in the France of older days, and had selected these poems from the works of Tristan Lhermite. The first song, to be sure, was not new, yet it fits well with the others of the cycle. I should like to dwell on many details, but will content myself with calling attention to the last line of the third song.

The *Ballade des femmes de Paris* is especially interesting to those of us who own Panzera's recording of it as he uses the later orchestral version. It hardly seems like the same song. The song is from the set of three *Ballades de Francois Villon*, published in 1910.

Finally *De Grève*, from the *Proses lyriques* to Debussy's own words, and the recital is over. This song, perhaps, should be taken as an encore, as it carries us back again to 1894. The program is not as long as you might think, since many of the record sides are rather short.

(Since writing this, we are given to understand a booklet comes with the set.)

—P. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

BACH-GOUNOD: *Ave Maria*; and BIZET: *Agnus Dei*; sung by Beniamino Gigli, with chorus and orchestra. Victor disc, 10 inch, No. 1786, price \$1.50.

WITH unimpaired voice and his usual lavishness, Mr. Gigli presents two religious numbers in undiluted operatic style.

The *Ave Maria* is a travesty of the Bach-Gounod arrangement. Gounod is thought to have gone pretty far in giving a melody to the Bach *Prelude*, but some, fortunately for him unnamed, arranger has now superim-

## COLUMBIA ANNOUNCES

### A New Roth String Quartet Release

SCHUBERT: Quartet in D minor (Death and the Maiden). Columbia Set No. 269 and AM-269.

This Full-Range preservation on discs of the Roth's incomparable performance of Schubert's beautiful *Quartet in D Minor* is a noble and compelling achievement.

### Sir Thomas Beecham's Latest Symphony Release

HAYDN: Symphony No. 99, in E flat major, played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thos. Beecham. Columbia set No. 264 and AM-264.

"One of Haydn's biggest and best — preciously played," says one European reviewer. In this superb recording Sir Thomas and the London Philharmonic create a greater miracle than was ever contemplated by the composer.

### An Album of Lieder

ERICH WOLFF: Lieder Album (Eighteen Songs). Sung in German by Ernst Wolff. Columbia set No. 268.

Ehrich Wolff, the Viennese composer-pianist, made several American tours with Julia Culp and Elena Gerhardt prior to his untimely death in 1913. His songs are highly regarded by all lieder singers for their melodious qualities and their mystical and religious fervor. Ernst Wolff, the German baritone (unrelated to the composer), once again contributes a valued song recital on Columbia records.

### A Complete Recording of

BOITO: *Mefistofele* (Opera in 4 Acts). Sung in Italian by famous Artists and chorus with orchestra of the La Scala Theatre, Milan, Italy, under direction of Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia Operatic set No. 17.

*Mefistofele* is a very significant work and a landmark in the history of Italian opera. Since 1875 it has been included in the operatic repertoires of all great opera-houses. The work is thrillingly sung here by the La Scala group headed by the eminent Italian basso — Nazzareno De Angelis.



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posed a choral part with startling harmonies and an outrageous new obbligato in the approved manner of much radio tripe. Gigli sings as if he relishes the concoction.

Bizet's *Agnus Dei*, originally an orchestral *Intermezzo* from the *Second L'Arlesienne Suite*, has also been touched up chorally. We acknowledge the lustiness of Gigli's singing but resent having to ignore the fact that he is singing the mystical text of the *Agnus Dei*.

Alois Melichar conducts the chorus and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra in the first selection, Bruno Seidler-Winkler, in the second. The recording is clear.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

GRIEG: *I Love Thee*; and BOHM: *Still as the Night*; sung by Charles Kullman, with instrumental sextet. Columbia disc, 10 inch, No. 4143-M, price \$1.00.

**K**ULLMAN has given us none but good records, and the two well-known love-songs on this disc come up to his own usual standard. Kullman always uses his smooth and well-schooled voice dramatically; he gives these songs a more excited fervor than they need and usually receive, but not more than they can legitimately bear. He enunciates clearly the English texts—Mrs. J. P. Morgan's for the Bohm song, L. David's, for the Grieg. The voice and the accompanying instrumental sextet record well.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

HANDEL: *Acis and Galatea, O Ruddier than the Cherry*; sung by Malcolm McEachern, and *Ptolemy, Silent Worship*; sung by Dennis Noble. Both with orchestra. Columbia disc, 10 inch, No. 4144-M, price \$1.00.

**I**T is to England's everlasting credit that she cherishes her love for Handel, whose many volumes of music become increasingly satisfying the more we know them.

Malcolm McEachern can make us forget all the other basses we have heard sing *O ruddier than the Cherry*, and so long as we can continue to hear this record he is welcome to a monopoly of the aria. His voice is remarkably rounded and resonant throughout its wide range, and has a great flexibility for florid passages. McEachern sings quietly, but at the same time the music is free to bounce along steadily and jollily. The orchestra gives a sprightly accompaniment.

On the other side of the disc McEachern meets his match in Dennis Noble, a baritone. Arthur Somerville has united an excerpt from the opera *Ptolemy* (Alessandro's aria, *Non*

*lo diro col labbro*, Act 1, Scene 2) to a poem that we have not yet identified, but one which certainly belongs to the Ben Jonson-Herrick tradition. The result is a love-song that belongs with *Have You Seen but a White Lillie Grow* and *Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes*, and this should be praise enough. Mr. Noble catches the feeling exquisitely. His voice has body and a quality of exceptional sweetness, and he uses it with superb ease. He shows taste in giving sentiment its just, but unexaggerated dues. The string orchestra gives him an accompaniment every bit as smooth as his own artistry.

This record is flawless from the standpoint of its music, rendition and recording. To forego its rewarding pleasure would be sheer masochism.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

MASSENET: *Thais, Dis-moi que je suis belle*; and CHARPENTIER: *Louise, Depuis le Jour*; sung by Helen Jepson, with orchestra conducted by Alexander Smalens. Victor 14153, price, \$2.00.

**MISS JEPSON** sets herself a hard test in recording these arias, and she acquits herself creditably, though not gloriously. Her intentions outstrip her present attainments. The voice is fresh, inclined to brilliance rather than sweetness. It tends to stand out too much from the orchestra.

The *Mirror Scene* from *Thais* could hardly be called vocally gracious, and its demands on Miss Jepson are obvious. The singer does not yet have sufficient assurance to be able to devote much consideration in making the aria stylistically interesting. The middle section of the aria conveys none of *Thais'* fear of Venus. The difficult *Depuis le Jour* shows youthful enthusiasm, but it lacks that warmth which should quicken our imagination to its appeal.

Experience can give Miss Jepson an ease that is not yet discernible in the handling of her bright voice. Her verve is admirable. A more subjective treatment of the music would make it more communicative to the listener.

The recording has an unflattering brilliance.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

SIBELIUS: *Flickan kom ifran sin älsklings möte*, and *Saf, Saf, Susa*; sung by Marian Anderson, with piano accompaniments by Kosti Vehanen. Victor disc, 10 inch, No. 1766, price \$1.50.

**WE** have previously lauded the vocal endowments and musical susceptibility of

Marion Anderson, and this new record confirms the earlier praise. Evidently, in the field of the *Lied*, this artist has few equals.

She sings here two of the songs of Sibelius that will permanently enrich our repertory of treasurable songs. Fröding's Swedish text of *Flikkan kom* (Op. 37, No. 5) relates a common story in folk-lore. A girl returns home with red hands, that she says the rose thorns have pricked; again, with red lips, stained with the raspberries she has picked. But when she returns the third time she confesses the truth to her mother. She begs that a grave be dug for her, with an inscription telling of her hands and lips flushed with the happiness of love, and then of her blanched cheeks and death after she knows of her lover's infidelity. Sibelius's setting respects the form and the stark emotions of the ballad's words. The accompaniment has a structural ruggedness to support the independence and sweep of the bold melody. Miss Anderson subtly colors her tones to the narrative, and achieves an overpowering penetration at the poignant climax.

*Saf, Saf, Susa* (Op. 36, No. 4) relates an incident of equal intensity. "Whisper, reeds, and murmur, waves. Tell me where to find Ingallil. She cried out like a wing-shot bird as it disappeared in the lake last year, when the green spring was here." They envied her her gold, her property, and her young love. She took it badly. They ran a thorn through her eye, and otherwise maltreated her. Sing sorrowfully sad little waves." The song opens in peaceful resignation, flames up in anger, and then falls into submission. Miss Anderson's voice is hauntingly beautiful and tender as it floats against the rippling waves of the accompaniment, and properly declamatory for the tragedy. Seldom do we hear such perceptive tonal shading, and such perfectly timed pauses. The singer creates the paradox of making us at the same time feel that she is always giving herself completely to the music, and yet withholding an unrevealed reserve.

A great part of the effectiveness of these songs is due to the mood setting and the dramatic pointing in the accompaniments. Miss Anderson is fortunate in Mr. Vehanen's help, for he seems to have her own musical approach and an all absorbing devotion to his task.

The recording is very fine.

—A. P. D.

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WOLFF, Ehrich J.: *Lieder Album* (Eighteen Songs). Sung in German by Ernst Wolff (baritone), accompanying himself at the piano. Columbia set 268, five 10-inch discs, price \$5.50.

**E**HRICH WOLFF first became known in this country when he appeared in recitals with the Dutch mezzo-soprano, Julia Culp. This was before the World War. It was on a concert tour with Culp in 1913 that the talented Viennese composer and pianist died suddenly on March 20th.

Culp was one of the first singers to feature Wolff's songs, which stem from the more lyric

German *lied* of Schubert, Schumann, Hugo Wolf and especially Brahms. Wolff is not a dramatic composer, but an essentially lyrical one. Philip Miller, in his excellent booklet included with the album set listed above, says that Wolff learned his greatest lessons from Brahms, and that this influence is most frequently in evidence. The sentiment, however, seems closer to Schumann to us and even to Mahler, although his moods are less intense.

Ehrich Wolff was born in Vienna in 1874. He was a pupil at the celebrated Conservatory of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, where he studied piano under Anton Door (a pupil of Czerny) and composition under R. and J. N. Fuchs. Wolff lived in Vienna until 1906 and then moved to Berlin where he won recognition as an accompanist.

Wolff's songs are all romantic in mood but individual in their harmonic background. They are the expressions of an introspective person, of a thoughtful and restrained mind. He conjures a mood by harmonic coloring, rather than through linear or melodic development. His songs are worth investigating and knowing, and will unquestionably appeal to admirers of *lieder*.

This is the second song-recital that Ernst Wolff, the German baritone (no relation to the composer) has made for Columbia. As in the first set, the *Songs of Robert Franz*, Wolff evinces the same musical merits and the same vocal inequalities. He is more successful in the brighter songs than in those more veiled in their meanings and requiring subdued utterance. When he endeavors to sing *pianissimo*, he often sounds tired and deviates from pitch, as, for example, in *Im Entschlafen* where he is frequently under the tone. When he sings in full voice however, as in *Viel bin ich umhergewandert* he is more successful and enjoyable. One will undeniably appreciate his renditions better if taken in homeopathic doses, for he does not differentiate too much in either tonal quality or interpretation from one song to the other. Ernst Wolff is unquestionably musically gifted, and his piano accompanying is indeed of a high order. One of his finest assets is his excellent diction. The recording here is splendid.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*  
CHRISTMAS CAROLS: (arr. by Felix White); played by Marek Weber and His Orchestra. Victor disc, No. v6183, price, \$1.25.

**F**OR his Christmas offering Marek Weber augments his orchestra with organ and

chimes. Many old and well-known carols have been strung together for us by Felix White, in a frank and simple *potpourri*. The result may serve to gladden the heart at this festive season. I was a bit surprised when *The holly and the ivy* turned out to be the "other" tune, but for the most part the carols need no introduction. Here is the list: *God rest you, merry gentlemen, Silent night, The holly and the ivy, First Noel, Christmas day in the morning, Adeste fideles, Ye watchers and ye holy ones, Wassail song, Good King Wenceslas, Mark the herald angels sing.*

It seems obvious that, wherever the recording was made, it was intended for English-speaking consumption, as these carols all belong in our annual repertoire. The recording is excellent.

—P. M.

### The Marriage of Figaro

The recording of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* arrived too late for review in this issue. It will be reviewed next month. This set is the one issued in England originally as a Society issue. *The American Music Lover* was among those who urged Victor to release it domestically. The performance, although not a great one, is nonetheless satisfying. It is the work of an English provincial opera company.

### A Japanese Recording

OKI, MASAO: *Itsutsu no chanashi* (Five Stories), for orchestra; played by Japanese Symphony Orchestra direction of the composer. Teichiku Gramophone Record.

**O**KI is a young Japanese composer said to be highly regarded in his native land. The present work is doubly interesting — firstly, because it shows how much and how definitely occidental musical idioms have become a part of Japanese culture, and secondly, because it exhibits a native musician striving to interrelate oriental and occidental idioms in a work for a modern symphony orchestra.

We know nothing about the program of the stories, but judging from the quality of the music we would say they were fantastic and unquestionably of dramatic import. Oki might be termed a Japanese Ravel, although it cannot be claimed that he is as fastidious as the Frenchman. He is more stark, more intense and bold, but his effects are calculated

(Continued on Page 276)

# In the Popular Vein

By HORACE "VAN" NORMAN

## BALLROOM DANCE

AAAA—*A High Hat, A Piccolo and a Cane*, and *Close to Me*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25478.

Never were two numbers more completely dissimilar than these, the former being a brisk swing tune and the latter a drowsy waltz, but Dorsey does them both as though each were his particular specialty and in so doing gives evidence of a versatility that is as rare as it is refreshing. For a band which has always seemed to us essentially a swing combination, this group does a better job on the sweet stuff than anyone possibly has a right to expect from as talented a bunch of go-to-towners as these lads have continually demonstrated themselves to be. The efforts of certain A-1 swing groups to play waltzes are recalled with twinges of agony and the fact that at least one band is able to do both types of work equally well is proof that the sweet and the hot are not necessarily incompatible.

AAA—*It's De-Lovely*, and *You've Got Something*, from *Red, Hot and Blue*. Leo Reisman and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7753.

For the second successive month, the big news in this field is Mr. Cole Porter, this time by virtue of his score for *Red, Hot and Blue*. Whatever may be the verdict of posterity on this most recent effort of the occasionally scintillating Cole, it is our impression that musically these numbers are far from being up to his standard. Not but what tenth-rate Porter is still several notches better than the routine level of Tin Pan Alley: one is yet bound to feel somehow that one has been let down by the complete lack of distinction shown in these two tunes. It is, of course, practically impossible for Porter to write a dull lyric, and if a few more of the extra lyrics which are sung in the show were used on the records, one might be able to overlook the musical paucity of the numbers. Reisman, whose man is closely identified with some of Porter's biggest hits in the past, does what he can with the tunes, and in the case of *You've Got Something*, which is rather a suave, not unpleasing if thoroughly unoriginal melody, the results at least are good listening, but I don't think any band, anywhere, could make much out of the ugly *It's De-Lovely*. One can only say, "No, Cole, it isn't."

AAA—*It Happened in Chicago*, from *Billy Rose's Casa Manana*, and *Scared*. Freddy Martin and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7763.

Martin's orchestra is a good example of a group which, though never striving for excessive originality in orchestration or rhythmic treatment, always succeeds in doing pleasing and highly danceable work. It has but one tone color which it employs

unceasingly and I suspect a whole evening of it would become intolerable but his very occasional appearances on records are always welcome as a relief from the extravagant methods of so many of his fellow leaders. The numbers themselves don't make so much difference, they all sound alike anyhow the way Martin plays them, and the vocals of Elmer Feldkamp and the extremely casual Terry Shand, both members of the band, are always easy to listen to. *It Happened in Chicago* is an amusing ditty with a persuasive tune by Dana Suesse.

AAA—*Something Has Happened to Me*, and *An Apple a Day*, both from *This Mad Whirl*. Hal Kemp and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7775.

These two tunes are both in the current University of Pennsylvania Mask and Wig Club production, and if the numbers sound suspiciously professional to be the work of undergraduates, it may or may not be disillusioning to learn that the writers, Messrs. Moe Jaffe and Clay Boland, are U. of P. alumni of many years' standing, Jane having written, among others, that relic of your adolescence and mine, *Collegiate*. Kemp, who appears to have a virtual monopoly on the college-show tunes, does nicely enough with them, and *An Apple a Day* in his adroit version seems to have possibilities for a smart popularity.

AAA—*Love, What Are You Doing to My Heart?* and *Say Si Si*. Xavier Cugat and his Orchestra. Victor 25407.

Re-issues both, the former having been previously released under its French title and the latter under its Spanish, and both enjoying a higher degree of popularity now than at the time of their initial release a year or more ago, which is the way it should be with really good tunes, and would be, too, if they weren't strangled to death at their birth by the radio bands and their "plugs".

AA—*Madame Ah La Marquise*, by Joe Loss and his Orchestra, and *Announcers' Blues*, by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra. Victor 25404.

The former is an Anglicized version of a tune that has been sweeping France for the past six months or so called *Tout Va Tres Bien*, and which is nothing more or less than that classic of early phonograph lore, *No News*, or *What Killed the Dog*. The ideas are identical, anyway, and it simply goes to prove that there is no gag like an old one, something which the radio comics have long since found out for themselves. *Announcers' Blues* is the same thing that Trumbauer recorded under his name for Brunswick some time ago, but this seems a better recorded version, although in all other respects it is precisely the same, Trumbauer using Whiteman's band for his Brunswick platters.



AA—*Tea on the Terrace*, and *Under Your Spell*. Nat Brandwynne and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7774.

Brandwynne applies his sophisticated treatment to an equally sophisticated tune, Sam Coslow's *Tea on the Terrace*, and the results are pleasing enough, while *Under Your Spell*, written by Dietz and Schwartz for the current Lawrence Tibbett vehicle of the same name, though a less distinctive tune, comes off equally well, with Brandwynne's facile fingers lending a nice pianistic polish to the whole thing.

\* \* \* \*

AA—*Riding High*, from *Red Hot and Blue*, and *Now That Summer Is Gone*. Guy Lombardo and his Orchestra. Victor 25444.

More material from Cole Porter, and the remarks made concerning the other *Red, Hot and Blue* numbers apply equally well here. The number in question is oddly well suited to the style of Lombardo and his performance of it is unquestionably rhythmic, even though it be the little-girl-rolling-a-hoop sort of rhythm. The reverse is hopelessly banal stuff of the variety that we generally expect from Lombardo and almost always get.

## HOT JAZZ

AAAA—*Love Me or Leave Me*, by Benny Goodman and his Orchestra, and *Exactly Like You*, by the Benny Goodman Trio. Victor 25406.

*Love Me or Leave Me* is an old favorite in the Goodman repertoire, he having recorded it once before for Columbia back in the days when he was known exclusively to the intelligentsia of swing. Now that he has been taken up by the hoi polloi,

he gives us another version of it, but in a radically different arrangement. Those of us who thought the early recording was one of Goodman's best may have a little difficulty in getting used to the new job, but it is undoubtedly every bit as good as the other, although it lacks Jack Teagarden's triumphant trombone work, which was such a conspicuous feature of the Columbia version. The trio, on the reverse, is in its usual impeccable form: in fact, it seems to us that Wilson, in particular has never been heard to such magnificent advantage as he is in this recording. It is flawless work, of a kind that is heard once in a blue moon, and then only from Wilson himself.

\* \* \* \*

AAA—*The Way You Look Tonight*, and *Easy to Love*. Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7762.

It would be difficult to imagine any two tunes which adapt themselves any less well to hot treatment than do these. It is only, in fact, as they are distorted and twisted beyond any recognition that they can possibly qualify as authentic swing numbers. Needless to say, that is precisely what is done to them here. Billie Holiday's vocal in *Easy to Love*, for example, might well serve as a model of how far it is possible for a singer to depart from the melody which she is ostensibly trying to sing, and yet how thoroughly charming she can be in the process of crucifying a tune! One of the most effective and original vocalists in the game today, it would be interesting to see what a little large-scale plugging on the air might do for her. Granted that hearing her in the smoky Onyx Club at 3 a. m. is one thing and hearing her over a cold microphone in the evening is another, it ought to be worth some sponsor's effort to give her a trial.

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# Swing Music Notes

By ENZO ARCHETTI

The New York branch of the United Hot Clubs of America has to all intents and purposes, died a passive death. All that is left is to bury the corpse. But it shall not go to its grave unlamented and undefended because it died a shameful death—the death of one who had been neglected, forgotten. The blame rests with both the officials and the members. The officials abandoned it for other interests, probably more lucrative and exciting. The members sat back with folded hands and waited for things to happen. Each looked to the other to start something and consequently nothing happened. Even the first two special issues of records sponsored by the Club were so poorly supported by the members, and so listlessly pushed by the officials that the third issue—a rare Bessie Smith—has been abandoned.

Probably the entire blame does not rest with the members of the U. H. C. A. and its officers. Probably New York itself is to blame. The city is so large; it offers so much to those who look for it—Swing Lane, on West 52nd St., the many theatres offering first line swing orchestras, Harlem, and the meagre offerings of the night clubs. But what the U. H. C. A. could give, which the City could not, was an intimate kind of jazz created by a small, select group—unhampered by any commercial limitations—for

an equally select group of enthusiasts. All of which was comparable in a general way to the groups of Florentine music lovers who gathered, during the Renaissance in Italy, to create music for their own pleasure and edification. But unlike the Florentines, the modern enthusiasts did not create—either very long or enthusiastically.

And what makes the failure more bitter is that branches of the U. H. C. A.—in Chicago, and elsewhere—are alive and progressing; or at least, they are active.

The increased interest in historic records lately — the recently created Record Collector's Corner in this magazine, the activity of the International Record Collectors Club, the Collector's Corner in *The Gramophone*, the many sales of old records are evidence of this — has a rival in the renewed interest in old jazz records, an interest which has grown to astonishing proportions in the last year or so. In a way, this is not surprising when we consider the ballyhoo which has sent hot jazz, under the fancier name of swing music, skyrocketing to the very dizzy — and precarious — heights of a fad. The amount of trash which has been churned out

(Continued on Page 277)

# Wagner Orchestral Excerpts

## In New Scoring System

WAGNER ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS IN SCORE: Edited and Devised by Albert E. Wier. (No. 4 of the Miniature Score Series) — Harcourt, Brace & Company, N. Y. C. Price \$5.00, paper cover; \$7.50, cloth cover.

IT is the simple, informative things—things designed to clarify and direct one's way through channels which might otherwise be complicated if it were not for their existence — which are the most valuable and enduring. Things like traffic lights, maps and sign posts — simple devices no doubt, but essential ones to the well-being of the greater bulk of humanity. Albert E. Wier's arrow system of following music is such a simple device, but one which is nonetheless most valuable and enduring. No less a prominent musician than Toscanini has acclaimed it as one of the most valuable developments in music reading that has ever been advanced. Mr. Wier's latest book, utilizing his arrow system, *Orchestral Excerpts in Score from Wagner*, owes its form, in fact, to the advice of Toscanini, for the Italian maestro helped select the excerpts that this volume contains.

This is by far the most pretentious volume that Mr. Wier has edited to date, and a truly all embracing one. It is set up in chronological order, so that anyone so interested can study Wagner's development. It begins with the *Faust* and the *Rienzi Overtures* dating from 1840, takes in excerpts from *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *The Ring*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Parsifal* (1882), and even includes the *Siegfried Idyll*. There are in all thirty-one excerpts from Wagner, many of which cannot be procured in miniature score outside of the complete opera edition. Both versions of the *Tannhäuser Overture* are included, the original 1845 edition and the Paris version made in 1861. From *Tristan and Isolde*, the editor has given not only the *Prelude* and *Liebestod*, but the music included in the Philadelphia Orchestra Synthesis minus some connecting passages which were not, of course, in the original Wagner score.

There is no question that apprehending music by eye as well as by ear assists one toward a fuller and more comprehensive appreciation. Mr. Wier's ingenious system of arrow signals, which identifies the various themes as they appear and recur, is designed to make score reading a real joy. In Wagner the complexities of the instrumental line, the confusion occasioned by the alternation of the theme from one group of instruments to another, is tremendously clarified by this arrow system. If ever a composer needed such signals to simplify his musical traffic, Wagner certainly did. With this system included in a Wagnerian orchestral score, its reading is now made easy to all. Even one who has never followed an orchestral score will be able to travel through one guided by these arrows, that is, of course, providing he can read musical notation.

Mr. Wier has been most thorough in devising this volume. He outlines Wagner's instrumentation, giving the names of the instruments in German, Italian and English, and he also outlines Wagner's Musical Terms, giving the Italian equivalent of the German markings. Before each excerpt, appears a factual note on the work, telling when first conceived, its first performance, how it was originally received by critics, and recommendations of some available recordings. The complete Ring Motives are given with the view that "a better understanding of the music itself, and an ever increasing admiration of Richard Wagner's skill in the use of the leitmotiv" will result. In designating the motives, Mr. Wier says he has followed the more widely accepted titles.

The present volume, as we have already intimated, is much larger than its predecessors. It measures nine by twelve inches in size, and contains upward to 400 pages. The manner in which the volume is arranged follows the others, that is four pages of miniature score are printed on each page, except in those cases where the instrumentation is so large that double the space is required, then only two pages of score appear on a single page.

Each of these volumes of the *Miniature Score Series*, as it comes along, tends to prove that the editor has the interest of the music lover at heart. The expression — "infinite riches in a little room" — might well be applied to each of these volumes, for their wealth is considerable.

In preparation are two more volumes for the *Miniature Score Series*, one to contain symphonies by Mendelssohn, Schumann, Berlioz, Dvorak, Franck, Bruckner, d'Indy, etc., and the other to contain symphonic poems by Strauss, Tchaikowsky, Saint-Saëns, Sibelius, Rimsky-Korsakow, Moussorgsky and others. We are certain that many will be anticipating their publication.

—Peter Hugh Reed.

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### Swing Music Notes

(Continued from Page 275)

by every conceivable orchestra, radio station, and recording company under the much maligned name of swing music in the last year or two has been enough to turn the stomach of many a lover of the *sincere* jazz. The reaction was inevitable. They turned back to the good old ones recorded by Okeh, Vocalion, Gennett, Paramount, and other companies, some of which have disappeared from the field. Only there could they find real sincerity, virtuosity free from exhibitionism, improvisation untainted by commercialism.

Dealers who were foresighted knew the reaction would come and held on to their store of records, although they must have seemed white elephants through the many lean years, and now they are beginning to be rewarded for their patience and faith.

The long promised book by the eminent French jazz connoisseur (and artist — to judge by his excellent sketches in the magazine *Jazz Hot*) Charles Delaunay has just been published in France. From all advance reports from Europe and the enthusiastic review it received in *Jazz Hot*, it seems that *Discographic Hot* will prove to be an interesting and valuable book to have. As soon as a copy is received, the book will be reviewed in the *American Music Lover*.

The Saturday Night Swing Sessions on WABC continue to grow and improve. During November the Sessions were deprived of Bunny Berigan for two weeks while he was in Boston opening with a new show. In that time one of the Sessions was cancelled because of the New York Auto Show. His absence served to whet the appetite of the many swing enthusiasts who look forward to this Saturday night period, so that when he returned on the 21st he was greeted with special enthusiasm, especially by the audience which attends the broadcasts. The enthusiasm was not undeserved because Bunny was in excellent form. Add to this that on the same program there was Lucky Millander with some of his band, including the excellent Red Allen, and Will Hudson who directed two of his own compositions and you will see why this program was of such exceptional interest.

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The rest of the November Sessions had as guests Earl Hines and Mary Lou Williams. Mary Lou Williams is that remarkable pianist of Andy Kirk's Band. In fact in my opinion, she is Andy Kirk's Band. There is no other jazz pianist quite like her today. This statement is not intended to belittle the work of the other great jazz pianists of this period like Teddy Wilson, Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Jess Stacey, Joe Sullivan, Meade Lux Lewis, and others, but Mary Lou Williams is as individual in style as any of these pianists and equally great in importance. At the recent show at the Harlem Apollo, Andy Kirk's Band gave a poor account of itself. The band was a big disappointment after hearing their fine recordings issued on Decca and Brunswick. But in all fairness, the fault was not entirely theirs. They had been surrounded by a mediocre show and the whole program was quite plainly insufficiently rehearsed. The band was nervous during this, their first New York appearance. But the excellence of the band showed through in spots particularly during *I Never Slept a Wink Last Night*, which was practically a piano solo for Mary Lou Williams with orchestral background, and *Christopher Columbus*. Evidently the band relaxes better in the recording studio, so we hope the companies do not pass up any opportunities while the band is in New York.

A copy of the much discussed and much written about *Waltzing the Blues* as recorded on English Vocalion 19-A, by Benny Carter and his Swing Quartet has at last reached these shores. Carter's composition is decidedly fascinating. It is a waltz without a doubt. It has the spirit of the blues. And it certainly swings. But there is something disconcerting about it. It just can't seem to make up its mind what it wants to be — a waltz or a blues. One thing about it is definite however, and that is the excellence of Benny Carter's playing on tenor sax, alto sax, and trumpet. *Tiger Rag* occupies the other side.

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### Record Reviews

(Continued from Page 272)

like Ravel's, and his orchestration has similar characteristics. One might even say that Sibelius had influenced him; but all this only goes to show that Oki has undoubtedly been a student of contemporary orchestral music. This is not to say that his music is completely derivative. Having heard the composition only once, it is difficult to say how it will endure. Music lovers who admire the efforts of such men as Eicheim and Lapham will undoubtedly admire this music, for both of those composers have striven to create similar music none of which is more compelling than this. (We procured this recording through the enterprising International Records Agency).

—P. H. R.

(Continued on Page 280)

# Apologia for Radio

(With a Few Complaints)

By FRANK EDGAR

**R**ADIO, the twenty-four hour amusement drudge of the average American Family, has been the victim (although not altogether undeserving) of a lot of criticism. Even many of its pioneer admirers have turned on it in fury, on the basis that it disseminates drivel, that there is too much advertising, that there is not enough good music, that there is not enough dance music, and that its comedians are stale. And so the carping chorus continues with only an occasional solo raised weakly in its praise.

To many of us who cannot attend football games, boxing matches, the series, and other sporting events of primary importance to some people the radio has proved itself to be a God-send. Perhaps it is not as effective as seeing the contest in its actuality but it is much better than reading about it later in cold impersonal print. What if the commentator has an unpleasant voice, uses poor English and enunciates imperfectly? All this is forgotten in the excitement of the truly vivid chronicle of events. To the imaginative listener, surely he evokes a satisfying picture.

Other broadcasts, such as historical occasions and speeches by prominent persons, are also brought into our homes by the magic of radio. If the historic event falls flat, and if the prominent person's speech turns out to be the usual small cake of platitude insufficiently disguised with the pink icing of verbal floridity, can we blame the radio itself? Alchemy is still an unachieved art and nothing can transmute dross into gold.

The radio can, however, keep us informed as to what is going on. News broadcasts, although no substitute for the more complete newspapers, are not to be lightly dismissed, and the market quotations are of no small interest to the various investors who would otherwise have to wait for them until morning.

It is as a disseminator of music that radio falls down most of all—falls as a matter of fact with a dreadful thud. It lacks respect for its audience, hence the bitterness of the attacks upon it. Few can suffer impertinence to pass unrebuked. And it is nothing less than impertinent for certain manufacturing

firms to pay trained orchestras under competent leaders to bore us with transcriptions of piano pieces, isolated movements from too-often-repeated symphonies, and the falsely so-called "Popular classics". Occasionally, I must admit, something fresh and interesting creeps in but its advent seems accidental. Radio seems almost to apologize for taking up such time.

The general excellence of the Metropolitan Opera's Saturday broadcast and the New York Philharmonic Society's Sunday concert can not be quoted in refutation. These concerts are quite apart from radio *per se*.

Kindly advertisers who provide us with musical programmes try too hard to please every taste and so fall grievously and uncomfortably between two stools. They find themselves in the uneasy position of the fence-straddling politician—denied and slandered by both parties. How much more pleasant it would be if the advertiser "through whose courtesy" (abominable phrase) a first class artist is presented on the air would allow him or her to present nothing but the acknowledged best in music. But even here we cannot blame radio too much. Even in the concert hall the best musicians seem to provide too much melodious pap in order to catch the fancy of the less thoughtful but more profitable majority.

Records and a gramophone are the only resort for the few who want the best and nothing but the best in music.

## A Welcome Letter

To the Editor,  
Dear Sir:

I feel I cannot let this occasion of the November issue of *The American Music Lover* pass without sending you a word of congratulation on the increased size and scope of your interesting magazine. It is now obvious that *The American Music Lover* is established in America just as surely as *The Gramophone* is over here, and it is my sincere hope that it may continue to flourish.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM W. JOHNSON,

Chairman, The National Federation of  
Gramophone Societies; Educational  
Correspondent to "*The Gramophone*".

Gillingham, Kent, England. November 8th, 1936.

# Radio Notes

## ELABORATE XMAS SCHEDULE ARRANGED FOR NBC'S NETWORKS

Christmas, 1936, will be observed over National Broadcasting Company networks this year in what is probably the most elaborate series of holiday programs ever arranged for radio. The programs will begin with the singing of carols on Monday, December 14, and will culminate on Christmas with almost an entire day of broadcasting devoted to the commemoration of the birth of the Christ Child.

The series of programs featuring Christmas carols, which will be introduced on Monday, December 14, at 11:00 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Blue Network, will be heard at the same time and over the same network through December 23. Church choirs of all nationalities will be picked up from various parts of the world in presentations of Yule carols in their own languages.

The 'round-the-world broadcast of "Holy Night" will begin in a little church at Oberndorf, Austria, just outside Salzburg, where the song was written by Franz Gruber 117 years ago.

Children of the village will sing the song just as it was sung in the church on Christmas Eve of 1818 for the first time. The program will then switch to New York, for Christmas music by an NBC orchestra, and to historic Trinity Church, where the choir will sing the famous Christmas hymn. From New York the program will jump to Argentina, and from the South American republic to a mission in San Francisco. The next broadcast point will be from a church in Hawaii, with other possible pick ups to include the Philippine Islands and Japan. The program will be heard from 11:45 p. m., EST, on Christmas Eve, until 12:15 a. m., on Christmas morning, over both the NBC-Red and NBC-Blue Networks.

Tschaikowsky's *The Snow Maiden*, will be given its American premiere over the NBC-Blue Network from 8:00 to 9:00 p. m., EST, with Dr. Frank Black conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra and a group of noted concert singers. A translation of the Russian libretto, written originally by A. Ostroffsky, was commissioned by the National Broadcasting Company, and the libretto is now being adapted by Paul Wing, NBC director of children's programs. The work, a Christmas operetta, was performed in Russia several times and then seemingly forgotten. Dr. Frank Black declared that he could find no record of the operetta ever being performed in English, although excerpts are often played by symphony orchestras.

Among the special programs to be heard on Christmas Day will be a dramatization of episodes from the lives of Gilbert and Sullivan, written by George Ludlam, radio dramatist on the NBC continuity staff.

## STOKOWSKI AND THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA TO INAUGURATE NATIONWIDE CBS SERIES

Leopold Stokowski and the world-famous Philadelphia Orchestra inaugurated a brilliant series of thirty-nine nationwide broadcasts over the WABC-

Columbia network on Friday, November 13, from 10:00 to 10:30 p. m., EST. These programs, which originated in the auditorium of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, are sponsored by a group of forty important American banking institutions from coast to coast.

Stokowski, who directed the first three broadcasts of the new series, will be succeeded by Eugene Ormandy, also a conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Many of the nation's oldest banking institutions are sponsoring this series and it is worth noting that the Philadelphia Orchestra while officially organized under that name in 1900, actually traces its beginnings as an eminent American musical institution as far back as 1757. The orchestra had its origin at that time in a group of Philadelphia's semi-professional musicians who gave their first concert under the direction of a Mr. John Palma, at an assembly room in Lodge Alley in Philadelphia. In 1857 the Germania Orchestra was instituted and for 40 years formed the backbone of Philadelphia's musical life. In 1893 this organization gave way to a new body of musicians taking the name of the Philadelphia Symphony Society. From this latter organization stemmed the present great orchestra formed in 1900 from the ranks of the finest professional musicians available.

Under the direction of Fritz Scheel and Carl Pohlig the rich musical traditions and prestige of the Philadelphia Orchestra were firmly established and later brought into international prominence under the brilliant leadership of Leopold Stokowski, who became its conductor in 1912.

## UNEMPLOYED ENTERTAINERS STARRED IN VARIETY SHOW

Unemployed professional members of the entertainment world, including actors, singers and musicians who were left "at liberty" by the depression, are being given chances to stage their theatrical comebacks in a gala new series being presented weekly over coast-to-coast networks of the National Broadcasting Company. Among the talent appearing on the series are many professionals on the relief rolls of the Federal Theatre Project.

The program, known as Professional Parade, is heard each Wednesday from 9:00 to 10:00 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Blue Network.

Officials of the National Broadcasting Company, who have been working on the program idea with Federal Theatre Project officials for weeks, declared that more than two-thirds of the talent is drawn from WPA rolls, with approximately 20 per cent recruited from the ranks of unemployed professional actors.

Master of ceremonies for the novel program is Fred Niblo, pioneer of film production in the silent days. Many of the actors and actresses are veteran professionals who were left without jobs by the decline of vaudeville and who have since been unable to achieve regular billings.



John F. Royal, NBC vice president in charge of programs, declared that the main purpose of the program is to stimulate a demand for living entertainment in theatres, and that officials hope to put the actors to work in houses which do not now use such talent.

Royal emphasized the fact that the plan will not add to an already overcrowded field. The program will offer employment only to professionals who have not been able to find jobs.

Performers on the programs are paid the regular radio sustaining fee, and the time and station facilities are donated by the National Broadcasting Company. Federal Theatre officials pointed out that WPA actors are allowed to receive pay for work on their own time, but that they will be removed from the relief rolls as soon as they are booked into theatres on salary. NBC officials are now working on plans which will allow the programs to be sponsored.

If plans for the broadcast are successful, performers on the program will be immediately booked into theatres. New actors, actresses, musicians and singers will be used on each subsequent program, thus eliminating the cast of each program from the relief rolls.

#### CHASINS' MUSIC SERIES

In response to the thousands of letters received from listeners, Abram Chasins, young composer-pianist, builds his programs for Chasins' Music Series programs on Saturdays, at 12:00 noon, EST, over the NBC-Red Network. Because of listener demand, Chasins recently presented several all-Chopin programs.

#### YOUNG ARTISTS TO BE FEATURED IN EASTMAN SCHOOL SERIES

Young music artists of tomorrow will be featured in a special series of Thursday afternoon broadcasts by the NBC Music Guild when students of the Eastman School of Music are presented in programs of orchestral and chamber music. This series, to be broadcast over the NBC-Blue Network from Station WHAM, NBC affiliate in Rochester, N. Y., will include six programs, commencing December 3 and ending February 4, 1937.

The December 3 program, scheduled from 3:15 to 4:00 p. m., EST, will present the Eastman School Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Howard Hanson and Paul White.

The same ensemble will be presented on December 10, January 21 and 28. On January 4 pupils of the string quartet classes of Paul Kefer will offer a program of chamber music and a similar program will be broadcast by Arcadia Yegudkin's string and woodwind students on February 4.

The NBC Music Guild announces a two-fold purpose for including programs of this nature in its established series: first, to continue bringing to its radio audience the world's best chamber music and a broadening of this enterprise to include the masterworks of symphonic literature; and second, to encourage the young American artists of tomorrow by giving them opportunity to be heard in a series hitherto limited to chamber music artists and ensembles of established reputation. Last Spring the NBC Music Guild presented programs by graduate students of three of this country's leading music conservatories as an experiment.

#### BOSTON SYMPHONY BEGAN NBC SERIES NOVEMBER 19

Another of radio's outstanding features returned to the air on Thursday, November 19, when the world famous Boston Symphony Orchestra inaugurated its fifth season of broadcasts exclusively over networks of the National Broadcasting Company.

This program, which was heard over the NBC-Blue Network from 8:45 to 9:30 p. m., EST, was broadcast from Carnegie Hall in New York where the Boston Symphony Orchestra played the first of its annual subscription series of New York concerts.

During its current series the Boston Symphony Orchestra will broadcast four programs from Carnegie Hall in New York; four from the Sanders Theatre at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts; three from Symphony Hall in Boston; one from the Academy of Music in Brooklyn; and nine of its famous "Pop" concerts during its post-season in Symphony Hall, Boston. This year the Boston Symphony Orchestra is being broadcast under the auspices of the NBC Music Guild.

#### NBC MUSIC GUILD TO PRESENT CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA SERIES

The first of a special series of broadcasts by the Cleveland Orchestra, dedicated to the Music Teachers' National Association, was presented by the NBC Music Guild on Wednesday, November 18, over the NBC-Red Network from 1:45 to 2:45 p. m., EST. The series will continue on Wednesday afternoons at this hour to and including January 11.

Artur Rodzinski regular conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra and one of the two conductors chosen to lead the New York Philharmonic Symphony as successors to Arturo Toscanini, will conduct the orchestra.

The presentation of one of the nation's foremost symphony orchestras marks a departure from the NBC Music Guild's practice of confining its programs exclusively to chamber music, and is an extension of the Guild's activities.

#### KREINER QUARTET

The Kreiner Quartet will be heard in the following programs on Fridays from 3:00 to 3:30 p. m., EST, on the Columbia Broadcasting System network:

December 4th—Ravel String Quartet.

December 11th—*Bridge - Cherry Ripe*, Debussy String Quartet.

December 25th—Special Christmas program, including a Corelli composition.

#### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library of Congress Chamber Musicales, an annual NBC presentation under the auspices of the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation of the Library of Congress, will return to the air for a series of four broadcasts beginning Wednesday, December 2, from 10:00 to 10:30 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Blue network. The broadcast will originate in the Library of Congress Chamber Music Auditorium at Washington, D. C. Internationally famous for its promotion of music culture in the United States the foundation was established by an act of Congress accepting an endowment of \$250,000 from Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.

#### GOOD TIME SOCIETY IS NEW NBC SHOW

Presenting an outstanding cast of Negro performers in a bright revue of comedy and variety, a new radio program, entitled Good Time Society, will be inaugurated Friday, December 4, from 10:30 to 11:00 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Red network.

The show will feature situation comedy, with a thin thread of a plot being carried forward from week to week. Juano Hernandez, noted Negro writer and actor, is writing the script and will occupy the chief role of Potentate Jones, head man of the Society.

(Continued from Page 276)

SCHUBERT: *Symphony in B minor*, (Unfinished). (A comparison of various recordings).

Not because it is the latest recording, but because it is truly one of the most noble readings we have ever heard, do we place the newly recorded version of the "Unfinished" by Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra at the top of the long list of recordings made of this work. There are a round dozen versions of this symphony on records. Four of these in this country have attained, prior to the Koussevitzky set, considerable acclaim. These are the readings of Stokowski, Schalk, Sokoloff and Sir Henry Wood. Of the dozen interpretations, we have heard all except three. Out of the nine, however, only the four named and the version made by Prüwer are vividly remembered. Stokowski's interpretation owns much too much emotional grandeur in our estimation, for Schubert's simple, heartfelt music. This symphony does not need such strong contrasts of dynamic coloration. The reading is far too personal. The late Franz Schalk's interpretation, on the other hand, outlines without exaggeration the sentient contrasts of the music. He gives one of the most impressive readings of this work on records. The recording, on the other hand, is uneven, being diffused in the fullest passages and often lacking in true tonal coloring. Sokoloff's version stresses the lyricism of the song to the loss of its dramatic protest. Here again, the recording undoubtedly fails to do full justice to the conductor. Wood's reading is prosaic, too factual, although he certainly makes us aware of the music's drama. The recording here, we feel certain, does full justice to the conductor. Our recollection of Prüwer's reading, heard only once, is one of splendid musicianship. Von Schilling's interpretation is fundamentally spoiled by inferior recording: its bass being too small and its dynamic coloring sadly lacking. It is the one recording which we advise the music lover to shun. Melichar's reading proves stodgy on the whole, although it has its moments of charm. The recordings made by Kleiber, Blech, and Goosens, we have never heard, so we cannot comment upon them here.

—P. H. R.

## Editorial

(Continued from Page 237)

difficult aria. She early approached the recording horn, which apparently caused her no vocal inhibitions, making truly unmatched recordings of her foremost vocal achievements. No one has ever sung Schubert's *Der Erlkönig* more convincingly or compellingly than she. Her three distinct vocal inflections, her development of the drama in this great *lied* cannot be described — it must be heard. Her earliest recording of this song will always be a highly prized collectors' item and an interpretive lesson for vocal students of coming generations.

In the heyday of celebrity recordings, before radio came into existence, Schumann-Heink received \$47,000 annually from royalties on her phonograph discs.

In an early issue, Mr. Philip Miller in an article will discuss her contributions to the phonograph.

\* \* \* \*

The second recording made by *The Friends of Recorded Music* will be ready for distribution on December 10th. It is the *String Quartet in E flat, K-171*, by Mozart, which is played for us by the Kreiner Ensemble, who recorded the Boccherini issued last month.

Among works in preparation are Ernest Bloch's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, to be performed by Sylvan Shulman, a member of the Kreiner Quartet, and Lee Pattison; and Charles T. Griffes' *Piano Sonata*, which will feature Lee Pattison. It is the intention of *The Friends of Recorded Music* to bring forward an old work followed by a contemporary one, alternating their issues. We have made arrangements to bring forward some rare chamber orchestral music; the intentions of which we cannot at this time reveal. We can assure our interested subscribers, however, that these plans are definitely in the offing.

\* \* \* \*

It is expected that the article *Some Facts About Needles*, which has been under discussion for some months, will be featured in the January issue, unless some neglected *points* are found missing by our technical collaborators.

\* \* \* \*

Due to the exigencies of space, we have been compelled to hold over until the next issue the following items: *The Record Collectors' Corner*, and a review of Tovey's latest volume *Concertos*.

# THE FRIENDS OF RECORDED MUSIC

## A Society Sponsored by The AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

These records are available in all music stores that sell **The American Music Lover** and to members of the society. Every subscriber of **The American Music Lover** is a potential society member. Membership in the society will cost \$2.75 a year, which will include a subscription to the magazine, and permit the member to purchase his records at \$1.50 instead of \$2.00 which they will cost in the stores. Membership fee to all existent subscribers will be 50 cents for the first year.

Our first recording — Boccherini's **String Quartet in A Major, Opus 33, No. 6**, played for us by the Kreiner Quartet — was issued last month. The praise that has been accorded this issue is epitomized by a Canadian writer's review — "In my opinion the playing and recording are fully up to the standard of any chamber music records that have so far been produced by any company or ensemble of players, and I wish to congratulate you on your enterprise".

The second recording, available early in December, is Mozart's **String Quartet in E Flat, K. 171**. It is also played by the Kreiner Quartet. Both issues — the Boccherini and the Mozart — take two 12 inch discs. Since we are recording at 120 lines to the inch, we are able to include five minutes of music to a single side as in the case of the first movement of the Mozart quartet.

**The Friends of Recorded Music** takes pride in announcing the following distinguished men among its musical advisers: **Carl Engel, Lee Pattison, Carleton Sprague Smith, and Albert Stoessel.**

For further particulars write **The American Music Lover**, 12 East 22nd Street, New York City.

If you have friends whom you think would be interested in the recordings or in **The American Music Lover**, please send us their names so that we can forward a circular or a sample copy of the magazine.

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## COLLECTOR'S RECORDS TO BE HEARD ON THE AIR

Followers of **The Record Collector's Corner** will be glad to know that Mr. Julian Morton Moses begins a series of lecture-recitals on the air this Saturday at 3:30 p. m., from Station W2XR. His talks, devoted to "**Great Voices of the Past**" will be profusely illustrated with records from his library of famous singers. All are invited to send their comment and requests for particular artists to Mr. Moses, care of Station W2XR, New York, or **The American Music Lover**, 12 East 22nd Street, New York City.

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